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THE

WORKS

OF THE

AUTHOR

OF THE

NIGHT-THOUGHTS.

In FOUR VOLUMES.

REVISED and CORRECTED by Himself.

45931

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NIGHT the NINTH and LAST.

THE

CONSOLATION.

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NIGHT the NINTH and LAST.

THE CONSOLATION.

Containing, among other Things,

I. A MORAL Survey of the NOCTURNAL Heavens.
II. A NIGHT-ADDRESS to the DEITY.

Humbly Inſcribed to his GRACE

The DUKE of NEWCASTLE,

One of His Majeſty's Principal Secretaries of State.

—— *Fatis contraria fata rependens.* VIRG.

AS when a traveller, a long day paſt
In painful ſearch of what he cannot find,
At night's approach, content with the next cot,
There ruminates, a while, his labour loſt;
Then chears his heart with what his fate affords,
And chants his ſonnet to deceive the time,
Till the due ſeaſon calls him to repoſe:
Thus I, long-travell'd in the ways of men,
And dancing, with the reſt, the giddy maze,
Where *diſappointment* ſmiles at *hope*'s career;

Warn'd by the languor of life's evening ray,
At length have hous'd me in an humble ſhed;
Where, future wand'ring baniſh'd from my thought,
And waiting, patient, the ſweet hour of reſt,
I chaſe the moments with a ſerious ſong.
Song ſooths our pains; and age has pains to ſooth.
When age, care, crime, and friends embrac'd at heart,
Torn from my bleeding breaſt, and *death*'s dark ſhade,
Which hovers o'er me, quench th' ethereal fire;
Canſt thou, O *Night!* indulge one labour more?
One labour more indulge! then ſleep, my ſtrain!
Till, haply, wak'd by RAPHAEL's golden lyre,
Where night, death, age, care, crime, and ſorrow, ceaſe;
To bear a part in everlaſting lays;
Though far, far higher ſet, in aim, I truſt,
Symphonious to this humble prelude *here*.
Has not the muſe aſſerted *pleaſures pure*,
Like thoſe above; exploding other joys?
Weigh what was urg'd, LORENZO! fairly weigh;
And tell me, haſt thou cauſe to triumph ſtill?
I think, thou wilt forbear a boaſt ſo bold.
But if, beneath the favour of miſtake,
Thy ſmile's ſincere; not more ſincere can be
LORENZO's ſmile, than my compaſſion for him.
The ſick in *body* call for aid; the ſick
In *mind* are covetous of more diſeaſe;
And when at *worſt*, they dream themſelves quite *well*.
To *know* ourſelves diſeas'd, is half our cure.
When *nature*'s bluſh by *cuſtom* is wip'd off,
And conſcience, deaden'd by repeated ſtrokes,

Has into *manners* naturaliz'd our *crimes*;
The curſe of curſes is, our curſe to love;
To triumph in the blackneſs of our guilt
(As *Indians* glory in the deepeſt jet),
And throw aſide our *ſenſes* with our *peace*.
But grant no guilt, no ſhame, no leaſt alloy;
Grant joy and glory quite unſully'd ſhone;
Yet, ſtill, it ill deſerves LORENZO's heart.
No *joy*, no *glory*, glitters in thy ſight,
But, through the thin partition of an hour,
I ſee its ſables wove by *deſtiny*;
And *that* in ſorrow bury'd; *this*, in ſhame;
While howling *furies* ring the doleful knell;
And *conſcience*, now ſo ſoft thou ſcarce canſt hear
Her whiſper, echoes her eternal peal.
Where, the prime actors of the *laſt year*'s ſcene;
Their port ſo proud, their buſkin, and their plume?
How many *ſleep*, who kept the world *awake*
With luſtre, and with noiſe! has *death* proclaim'd
A truce, and hung his fated lance on high?
'Tis brandiſh'd ſtill; nor ſhall the *preſent year*
Be more tenacious of her human leaf,
Or ſpread of feeble life a thinner fall.
But needleſs *monuments* to wake the thought;
Life's *gayeſt* ſcenes ſpeak man's mortality;
Though in a ſtyle more florid, full as plain,
As *mauſoleums*, *pyramids*, and *tombs*.
What are our nobleſt ornaments, but *deaths*
Turn'd flatterers of life, in paint, or marble,
The well-ſtain'd canvas, or the featur'd ſtone?

Our fathers grace, or rather haunt, the ſcene.
Joy peoples her pavilion from the dead.
" *Profeſt diverſions!* cannot theſe eſcape?"—
Far from it: Theſe preſent us with a ſhroud;
And talk of *death*, like garlands o'er a grave.
As ſome bold plunderers, for bury'd *wealth*,
We ranſack tombs for *paſtime*; from the duſt
Call up the ſleeping hero; bid him tread
The ſcene for our amuſement: How like gods
We ſit; and, wrapt in immortality,
Shed gen'rous tears on wretches born to die;
Their fate deploring, to forget *our own!*
What all the pomps and triumphs of our lives,
But legacies in bloſſom? Our lean ſoil,
Luxuriant grown, and rank in vanities,
From friends interr'd beneath; a rich manure!
Like other worms, we banquet on the dead;
Like other worms, ſhall we crawl on, nor know
Our preſent frailties, or approaching fate?
LORENZO! ſuch the glories of the world!
What is the world itſelf? *Thy* world—A grave.
Where is the duſt that has not been alive?
The ſpade, the plough, diſturb our anceſtors;
From human mould we reap our daily bread.
The globe around earth's hollow ſurface ſhakes,
And is the ceiling of her ſleeping ſons.
O'er devaſtation we blind revels keep;
Whole bury'd towns ſupport the dancer's heel.
The *moiſt* of human frame the ſun exhales;
Winds ſcatter through the mighty void the *dry*;

Earth repoſſeſſes part of what ſhe gave,
And the freed ſpirit mounts on wings of fire;
Each element partakes our ſcatter'd ſpoils;
As nature, wide, our ruins ſpread: man's *death*
Inhabits all things, but the thought of man.
Nor man alone; his breathing buſt expires,
His tomb is mortal; empires die: Where, now,
The *Roman? Greek?* They ſtalk, an empty name!
Yet few regard them in this uſeful light;
Though half our learning is *their* epitaph.
When down thy vale, unlockt by midnight thought,
That loves to wander in thy ſunleſs realms,
O *death!* I ſtretch my view: what viſions riſe!
What triumphs! toils imperial! arts divine!
In wither'd laurels glide before my ſight!
What lengths of far-fam'd ages, billow'd high
With human agitation, roll along
In unſubſtantial images of air!
The melancholy ghoſts of dead renown,
Whiſp'ring faint echoes of the world's applauſe,
With penitential aſpect, as they paſs,
All point at earth, and hiſs at human pride,
The wiſdom of the *wiſe*, and prancings of the *great*.
But, O LORENZO! far the reſt above,
Of ghaſtly nature, and enormous ſize,
One form aſſaults my ſight, and chills my blood,
And ſhakes my frame. Of *one* departed world
I ſee the mighty ſhadow: Oozy wreath
And diſmal ſea-weed crown her; o'er her urn
Reclin'd, ſhe weeps her deſolated realms,

And bloated ſons; and, weeping, propheſies
Another's diſſolution, ſoon, in flames.
But, like CASSANDRA, propheſies in vain;
In vain, to many; not, I truſt, to thee.
For, know'ſt thou not, or art thou *loth* to know,
The great decree, the counſel of the ſkies?
Deluge and *conflagration*, dreadful powers!
Prime miniſters of vengeance! chain'd in caves
Diſtinct, apart the giant furies roar;
Apart; or, ſuch their horrid rage for ruin,
In mutual conflict would they riſe, and wage
Eternal war, till one was quite devour'd.
But not for *this*, ordain'd their boundleſs rage;
When heaven's inferior inſtruments of wrath,
War, *famine*, *peſtilence*, are found too weak
To ſcourge a world for her enormous crimes,
Theſe are let looſe, alternate: Down they ruſh,
Swift and tempeſtuous, from th' eternal throne,
With irreſiſtible commiſſion arm'd,
The world, in vain corrected, to deſtroy,
And eaſe creation of the ſhocking ſcene.
Seeſt thou, LORENZO! what depends *on* man?
The *fate* of nature; as *for* man, her *birth*.
Earth's actors change earth's tranſitory ſcenes,
And make creation groan with human guilt.
How muſt it groan, in a new deluge whelm'd,
But not of waters! At the deſtin'd hour,
By the loud trumpet ſummon'd to the charge,
See, all the formidable ſons of fire,
Eruptions, earthquakes, comets, lightnings, play

Their

Their various engines; all at once diſgorge
Their blazing magazines; and take, by ſtorm,
This poor terreſtrial citadel of man.
Amazing period! when each mountain-height
Out-burns *Veſuvius*; rocks eternal pour
Their melted maſs, as rivers once they pour'd;
Stars ruſh; and final *ruin* fiercely drives
Her plowſhare o'er creation!—while aloft,
More than aſtoniſhment! if more *can* be!
Far other *firmament* than e'er was ſeen,
Than e'er was thought by man! far other *ſtars!*
Stars animate, that govern theſe of fire;
Far other *ſun!*—A ſun, O how unlike
The Babe at *Bethlem!* how unlike the Man,
That groan'd on *Calvary!*—Yet *He* it is;
That Man of ſorrows! O how chang'd! what pomp!
In grandeur terrible, all heav'n deſcends!
And gods, ambitious, triumph in his train.
A ſwift archangel, with his golden wing,
As blots and clouds, that darken and diſgrace
The ſcene divine, ſweeps ſtars and ſuns aſide.
And now, all droſs remov'd, heav'n's own pure day,
Full on the confines of our æther, flames.
While (dreadful contraſt!) far, how far beneath!
Hell, burſting, belches forth her blazing ſeas,
And ſtorms ſulphureous; her voracious jaws
Expanding wide, and roaring for her prey.
LORENZO! welcome to this ſcene; the laſt
In nature's courſe; the firſt in wiſdom's thought.
This ſtrikes, if aught can ſtrike thee; *this* awakes

The moſt ſupine; *this* ſnatches man from death.
Rouſe, rouſe, LORENZO, then, and follow me,
Where truth, the moſt momentous man can hear,
Loud calls my ſoul, and ardor wings her flight.
I find my inſpiration in my theme;
The grandeur of my ſubject is my muſe.
At *midnight*, when mankind is wrapt in *peace*,
And worldly *fancy* feeds on golden dreams;
To give more dread to man's moſt dreadful hour,
At midnight, 'tis preſum'd, this pomp will burſt
From tenfold darkneſs; ſudden as the ſpark
From ſmitten ſteel; from nitrous grain, the blaze.
Man, ſtarting from his couch, ſhall ſleep no more!
The day is broke, which never more ſhall cloſe!
Above, around, beneath, amazement all!
Terror and glory join'd in their extremes!
Our GOD in grandeur, and our *world* on fire!
All nature ſtruggling in the pangs of death!
Doſt thou not hear her? Doſt thou not deplore
Her ſtrong convulſions, and her final groan?
Where are *we now?* Ah me! the ground is gone,
On which we ſtood; LORENZO! while thou may'ſt,
Provide more firm ſupport, or ſink for ever!
Where? how? from whence? vain hope! it is too late!
Where, where, for ſhelter, ſhall the guilty fly,
When conſternation turns the *good man* pale?
Great day! for which all other days were made;
For which *earth* roſe from *chaos*, man from *earth*;
And an eternity, the date of Gods,
Deſcended on poor earth-created man!

Great

Great day of dread, deciſion, and deſpair!
At thought of thee each ſublunary wiſh
Lets go its eager graſp, and drops the world;
And catches at each reed of hope in heaven.
At *thought* of thee!—and art thou *abſent* then?
LORENZO! no; 'tis here; it is begun;—
Already is begun the grand aſſize,
In thee, in all: Deputed conſcience ſcales
The dread tribunal, and foreſtalls our doom;
Foreſtalls; and, by foreſtalling, proves it *ſure*.
Why on himſelf ſhould man *void* judgment paſs?
Is idle *nature* laughing at her ſons?
Who *conſcience* ſent, her ſentence will ſupport,
And GOD above aſſert that GOD in man.

Thrice happy they! that enter *now* the court
Heav'n opens in their boſoms: But, how rare,
Ah me! that magnanimity, how rare!
What hero, like the man who ſtands himſelf;
Who dares to meet his naked heart alone;
Who hears, intrepid, the full charge it brings,
Reſolv'd to ſilence future murmurs there?
The coward flies; and, flying, is undone.
(Art thou a coward? No:) The coward flies;
Thinks, but thinks ſlightly; aſks, but fears to *know*;
Aſks, "*What is truth?*" with PILATE; and retires;
Diſſolves the court, and mingles with the throng;
Aſylum ſad! from reaſon, hope, and heav'n!

Shall all, but man, look out with ardent eye,
For that great day, which was ordain'd *for* man?
O day of conſummation! mark ſupreme

(If men are wiſe) of human thought! nor leaſt,
Or in the ſight of angels, or their KING!
Angels, whoſe radiant circles, height o'er height,
Order o'er order, riſing, blaze o'er blaze,
As in a theatre, ſurround this ſcene,
Intent on man, and anxious for his fate.
Angels look out for thee; for thee, their LORD,
To vindicate his glory; and for thee,
Creation univerſal calls aloud,
To diſ-involve the *moral* world, and give
To *nature*'s renovation brighter charms.
Shall man alone, whoſe fate, whoſe *final* fate,
Hangs on that hour, exclude it from his thought?
I think of nothing elſe; I ſee! I feel it!
All *nature*, like an earthquake, trembling round!
All *Deities*, like ſummer's ſwarms, on wing!
All baſking in the full meridian blaze!
I ſee the JUDGE inthron'd! the flaming guard!
The volume open'd! open'd ev'ry heart!
A ſun-beam pointing out each ſecret thought!
No patron! interceſſor none! now paſt
The ſweet, the clement, mediatorial hour!
For guilt no plea! to pain, no pauſe! no bound!
Inexorable, all! and all, extreme!
Nor man alone; the foe of GOD and man,
From his dark den, blaſpheming, drags his chain,
And rears his brazen front, with thunder ſcarr'd:
Receives his ſentence, and *begins* his hell.
All vengeance *paſt*, now, ſeems abundant grace:
Like meteors in a ſtormy ſky, how roll

His

His baleful eyes! he curſes whom he dreads;
And deems it the firſt moment of his fall.
'Tis *preſent* to my thought!—and yet where is it?
Angels can't tell me; angels cannot *gueſs*.
The *period*; from *created* beings lock'd
In darkneſs. But the *proceſs*, and the *place*,
Are leſs obſcure; for theſe may *man* enquire.
Say, thou great cloſe of human hopes and fears!
Great key of hearts! great finiſher of fates!
Great end! and great beginning! ſay, Where art thou?
Art thou in *time*, or in *eternity*?
Nor in *eternity*, nor *time*, I find thee.
Theſe, as two monarchs, on their borders meet,
(Monarchs of all elaps'd, or unarriv'd!)
As in debate, how beſt their pow'rs ally'd,
May ſwell the grandeur, or diſcharge the wrath,
Of HIM, whom both their monarchies obey.
Time, this faſt fabric for him built (and doom'd
With him to fall) *now* burſting o'er his head;
His lamp, the ſun, extinguiſh'd; from beneath
The frown of hideous darkneſs, calls his ſons
From their long ſlumber; from earth's heaving womb,
To ſecond birth! contemporary throng!
Rous'd at One call, upſtarted from One bed,
Preſt in One croud, appall'd with One amaze,
He turns them o'er, *Eternity!* to *thee*.
Then (as a king depos'd diſdains to live)
He falls on his own ſcythe; nor falls *alone*;
His greateſt foe falls with him; *Time*, and he
Who murder'd all *time*'s offspring, *Death*, expire.

TIME

TIME was! ETERNITY now reigns alone!
Aweful Eternity! offended queen!
And her reſentment to mankind, how juſt!
With kind intent, ſolliciting acceſs,
How often has ſhe knock'd at human hearts!
Rich to repay their hoſpitality,
How often call'd! and with the voice of GOD!
Yet bore repulſe, excluded as a cheat!
A dream! while fouleſt foes found welcome *there!*
A dream, a cheat, *now*, all things, but *her* ſmile.
For, lo! her twice ten thouſand gates thrown wide,
As thrice from *Indus* to the frozen pole,
With banners ſtreaming as the *comet*'s blaze,
And clarions, louder than the *deep* in ſtorms,
Sonorous as immortal breath can blow,
Pour forth their myriads, potentates, and powers,
Of light, of darkneſs; in a middle field,
Wide, as *creation!* populous, as wide!
A neutral region! there to mark th' event
Of that great drama, whoſe preceding ſcenes
Detain'd them cloſe ſpectators, through a length
Of ages, rip'ning to this grand reſult;
Ages, as yet unnumber'd, but by GOD;
Who now, pronouncing ſentence, vindicates
The rights of virtue, and his own renown.
ETERNITY, the various ſentence paſt,
Aſſigns the ſever'd throng diſtinct abodes,
Sulphureous, or ambroſial: What enſues?
The deed predominant! the deed of deeds!
Which makes a hell of hell, a heav'n of heav'n.

The

The *Goddeſs*, with determin'd aſpect, turns
Her adamantine key's enormous ſize
Through deſtiny's inextricable wards,
Deep driving ev'ry bolt, on both their fates.
Then, from the cryſtal battlements of heaven,
Down, down, ſhe hurls it through the dark profound,
Ten thouſand thouſand fathom; there to ruſt,
And ne'er unlock her reſolution more.
The deep reſounds, and hell, through all her glooms,
Returns, in groans, the melancholy roar.
O how unlike the chorus of the ſkies!
O how unlike thoſe ſhouts of joy, that ſhake
The whole *ethereal!* how the concave rings!
Nor ſtrange! when deities their voice exalt;
And louder far, than when *creation* roſe,
To ſee *creation*'s godlike aim, and end,
So well accompliſh'd! ſo divinely clos'd!
To ſee the mighty *dramatiſt*'s laſt act
(As meet) in glory riſing o'er the reſt.
No fancy'd GOD, a GOD, *indeed*, deſcends,
To ſolve all *knots*; to ſtrike the *moral* home;
To throw full day on darkeſt ſcenes of *time*;
To clear, commend, exalt, and crown the whole.
Hence, in one peal of loud, eternal praiſe,
The charm'd ſpectators thunder their applauſe;
And the vaſt void beyond, applauſe reſounds.
WHAT THEN AM I?—
Amidſt applauding worlds,
And worlds celeſtial, is there found on earth,
A peeviſh, diſſonant, rebellious ſtring,
Which

Which jars in the grand chorus, and *complains?*
Cenſure on *thee*, LORENZO! I ſuſpend,
And turn it on *myſelf*; how greatly due!
All, all is *right*; by GOD ordain'd or done;
And who, but GOD, reſum'd the friends *He* gave?
And have I been *complaining*, then, ſo long?
Complaining of his *favours*; *pain*, and *death?*
Who, without *pain*'s advice, would e'er be good?
Who, without *death*, but would be good in vain?
Pain is to ſave from *pain*; all puniſhment,
To make for *peace*; and death to ſave from *death*;
And ſecond death, to guard immortal life;
To rouſe the careleſs, the preſumptuous awe,
And turn the tide of ſouls another way;
By the ſame tenderneſs divine ordain'd,
That planted *Eden*, and high-bloom'd for man,
A fairer *Eden*, endleſs, in the ſkies.

Heav'n gives us friends to bleſs the *preſent* ſcene;
Reſumes them, to prepare us for the *next*.
All evils *natural* are *moral* goods;
All Diſcipline, *indulgence*, on the whole.
None are unhappy: *all* have cauſe to ſmile,
But ſuch as to themſelves that cauſe deny.
Our *faults* are at the bottom of our *pains*;
Error, in *acts*, or *judgment*, is the ſource
Of endleſs ſighs: We *ſin*, or we *miſtake*;
And *nature* tax, when falſe *opinion* ſtings.
Let impious grief be baniſh'd, joy indulg'd;
But chiefly *then*, when grief puts in her claim.
Joy from the *joyous*, frequently betrays,

Oft

Oft lives in vanity, and dies in woe.
Joy, amidſt *ills*, corroborates, exalts;
'Tis joy and conqueſt; joy, and virtue too.
A noble fortitude in *ills*, delights
Heav'n, earth, ourſelves; 'tis duty, glory, peace.
Affliction is the good man's ſhining ſcene;
Proſperity conceals his brighteſt ray;
As *night* to ſtars, *woe* luſtre gives to man.
Heroes in battle, pilots in the ſtorm,
And virtue in calamities, admire.
The crown of manhood is a winter-joy;
An evergreen, that ſtands the *Northern* blaſt,
And bloſſoms in the rigour of our fate.
'Tis a prime part of happineſs, to know
How much unhappineſs *muſt* prove our lot;
A part which few poſſeſs! I'll pay life's tax,
Without one rebel murmur, from this hour,
Nor think it miſery to be a *man*;
Who thinks *it is*, ſhall never be a *God*.
Some ills we wiſh for, when we wiſh to live.
What ſpoke *proud paſſion?*—"* Wiſh my being loſt?"
Preſumptuous! blaſphemous! abſurd! and falſe!
The triumph of my ſoul is,—That I *am*;
And therefore that I *may* be—*what?* LORENZO!
Look inward, and look deep; and deeper ſtill;
Unfathomably deep our treaſure runs
In golden veins, through all eternity!
Ages, and ages, and ſucceeding ſtill
New ages, *where* the phantom of an hour,

* Referring to the firſt night.

Which

Which courts, each night, dull ſlumber, for repair,
Shall wake, and wonder, and exult, and praiſe,
And fly through infinite, and all unlock;
And (if deſerv'd) by heav'n's redundant love,
Made half-adorable itſelf, adore;
And find, in adoration, endleſs joy!
Where thou, not maſter of a moment *here*,
Frail as the flow'r, and fleeting as the gale,
May'ſt boaſt a *whole eternity*, enrich'd
With all a *kind Omnipotence* can pour.
Since ADAM fell, no mortal, uninſpir'd,
Has ever yet conceiv'd, or ever ſhall,
How kind is GOD, how great (if good) is MAN.
No man too largely from heav'n's love can hope,
If what is *hop'd* he labours to *ſecure*.
Ills?—there are none: *All-gracious!* none from *thee*;
From *man* full many! num'rous is the race
Of blackeſt ills, and thoſe immortal too,
Begot by *madneſs* on fair *liberty*;
Heav'n's daughter, hell-debauch'd! *her* hand alone
Unlocks deſtruction to the ſons of men,
Firſt barr'd by *thine*: high-wall'd with adamant,
Guarded with terrors reaching to this world,
And cover'd with the thunders of thy law;
Whoſe threats are *mercies*, whoſe injunctions, *guides*,
Aſſiſting, not reſtraining, *reaſon*'s choice;
Whoſe ſanctions, *unavoidable reſults*
From nature's courſe, indulgently reveal'd;
If unreveal'd, more dang'rous, nor leſs ſure.
Thus, an indulgent father warns his ſons,

"Do

"Do this; fly that"—nor always tells the cauſe;
Pleas'd to reward, as duty to his will,
A conduct needful to their own repoſe.

Great GOD of wonders! (if, thy *love* ſurvey'd,
Aught elſe the name of wonderful retains)
What *rocks* are *theſe*, on which to build our truſt?
Thy ways admit no blemiſh; none I find;
Or this alone—"*That none is to be found.*"
Not one, to ſoften *cenſure*'s hardy crime;
Not one, to palliate peeviſh *grief*'s COMPLAINT,
Who like a *dæmon*, murm'ring from the duſt,
Dares into judgment call her Judge.—SUPREME!
For *all* I bleſs thee; moſt, for the *ſevere*;
* *Her* death—*my own* at hand—the fiery gulph,
That flaming bound of wrath omnipotent!
It thunders;—but it thunders to preſerve;
It ſtrengthens what it ſtrikes; its wholſome dread
Averts the dreaded pain; its hideous groans
Join heav'n's ſweet hallelujahs in thy praiſe,
Great Source of good *alone!* how kind in all!
In vengeance kind! *pain*, *death*, *gehenna*, SAVE.

Thus, in thy world material, *Mighty Mind!*
Not that alone which *ſolaces*, and *ſhines*,
The *rough* and *gloomy*, challenges our praiſe.
The *winter* is as needful as the *ſpring*;
The *thunder*, as the ſun; a ſtagnate maſs
Of vapours breeds a peſtilential air:
Nor more propitious the *Favonian* breeze
To nature's health, than purifying ſtorms;
The dread *Volcano* miniſters to good.

* LUCIA.

Its

Its ſmother'd flames might undermine the world.
Loud *Ætnas* fulminate in love to man;
Comets good omens are, when duly ſcann'd;
And, in their uſe, *eclipſes* learn to ſhine.
Man is reſponſible for *ills* receiv'd;
Thoſe we call *wretched* are a choſen band,
Compell'd to refuge in the *right*, for peace.
Amid my liſt of bleſſings infinite,
Stand this the foremoſt, "*That my heart has bled.*"
'Tis heav'n's laſt effort of good-will to man;
When *pain* can't bleſs, heav'n quits us in deſpair.
Who fails to grieve, when juſt occaſion calls,
Or grieves too much, deſerves not to be bleſt;
Inhuman, or effeminate, his heart;
Reaſon abſolves the grief, which *reaſon* ends.
May heav'n ne'er truſt my friend with happineſs,
Till it has taught him how to bear it well,
By previous pain; and made it *ſafe* to *ſmile!*
Such ſmiles are mine, and *ſuch* may they remain;
Nor hazard their extinction, from exceſs.
My change of *heart* a change of *ſtyle* demands;
The CONSOLATION cancels the COMPLAINT,
And makes a convert of my guilty ſong.
As when o'er-labour'd, and inclin'd to breathe,
A panting traveller, ſome riſing ground,
Some ſmall aſcent, has gain'd, he turns him round,
And meaſures with his eye the various vales,
The fields, woods, meads, and rivers, he has paſt;
And, ſatiate of his journey, thinks of home,
Endear'd by diſtance, nor affects more toil;

Thus

Thus I, though ſmall, indeed, is that aſcent
The muſe has gain'd, review the paths ſhe trod;
Various, extenſive, beaten but by view;
And, conſcious of her prudence in repoſe,
Pauſe; and with pleaſure meditate an end,
Though ſtill remote; ſo fruitful is my theme.
Through many a field of *moral*, and *divine*,
The muſe has ſtray'd; and much of *ſorrow* ſeen
In human ways; and much of *falſe* and *vain*;
Which none, who travel this bad road, can miſs.
O'er *friends deceas'd* full heartily ſhe wept;
Of *love divine* the wonders ſhe diſplay'd;
Prov'd man *immortal*; ſhew'd the *ſource of joy*;
The *grand tribunal* rais'd; aſſign'd the bounds
Of *human grief*: In *few*, to cloſe the whole,
The moral muſe has ſhadow'd out a ſketch,
Though not in form, nor with a RAPHAEL-ſtroke,
Of *moſt* our weakneſs needs *believe*, or *do*,
In this our land of travel, and of hope,
For peace on *earth*, or proſpect of the *ſkies*.
What then remains? much! much! a mighty debt
To be diſcharg'd: Theſe thoughts, O NIGHT! are thine;
From thee they came, like lovers' ſecret ſighs,
While others ſlept. So, CYNTHIA (poets feign)
In ſhadows veil'd, ſoft-ſliding from her ſphere,
Her ſhepherd chear'd; of her enamour'd leſs,
Than I of thee.—And art thou ſtill unſung,
Beneath whoſe brow, and by whoſe aid, I ſing?
Immoral ſilence! where ſhall I begin?

Where

Where end? or how ſteal muſic from the ſpheres,
To ſooth their goddeſs?
O majeſtic NIGHT!
Nature's great anceſtor! *day*'s elder-born!
And fated to ſurvive the tranſient ſun!
By mortals, and immortals, ſeen with awe!
A ſtarry crown thy raven brow adorns,
An azure zone thy waiſt; clouds, in heav'n's loom
Wrought through varieties of ſhape and ſhade,
In ample folds of drapery divine,
Thy flowing mantle form; and, heav'n throughout,
Voluminouſly pour thy pompous train.
Thy gloomy grandeurs (*nature*'s moſt auguſt,
Inſpiring aſpect!) claim a grateful verſe;
And, like a ſable curtain ſtarr'd with gold,
Drawn o'er my labours paſt, ſhall cloſe the ſcene.
And what, O man! ſo *worthy* to be ſung?
What more prepares us for the ſongs of heaven?
Creation, of archangels is the theme!
What, to be ſung, ſo *needful?* What ſo well
Celeſtial joys prepare us to ſuſtain?
The ſoul of man, HIS face deſign'd to ſee,
Who gave theſe wonders to be ſeen by man,
Has *here* a previous ſcene of objects *great*,
On which to dwell; to ſtretch to that expanſe
Of thought, to riſe to that exalted height
Of admiration, to contract that awe,
And give her whole capacities that ſtrength,
Which beſt may qualify for *final* joy.
The more our ſpirits are inlarg'd on *earth*,
The deeper draught ſhall they receive of *heaven*.

Heav'n's

Heav'n's KING! whoſe face unveil'd conſummates bliſs;
Redundant bliſs! which fills that mighty void,
The whole creation leaves in human hearts!
THOU, who didſt touch the lip of JESSE's ſon,
Rapt in ſweet contemplation of theſe fires,
And ſet his harp in concert with the ſpheres;
While of thy works *material* the Supreme
I dare attempt, aſſiſt my daring ſong.
Looſe me from *earth*'s incloſure, from the *ſun*'s
Contracted circle ſet my heart at large;
Eliminate my ſpirit, give it range
Through provinces of thought yet unexplor'd;
Teach me, by this ſtupendous ſcaffolding,
Creation's golden ſteps, to climb to THEE.
Teach me with *art* great *nature* to controul,
And ſpread a luſtre o'er the ſhades of *night*.
Feel I thy kind aſſent? and ſhall the *ſun*
Be ſeen at *midnight*, riſing in my ſong?
LORENZO! come, and warm thee: thou, whoſe heart,
Whoſe *little* heart, is moor'd within a nook
Of this obſcure terreſtrial, anchor weigh.
Another ocean calls, a *nobler* port;
I am thy pilot, I thy proſp'rous gale.
Gainful thy voyage through yon azure main;
Main, without tempeſt, pirate, rock, or ſhore;
And whence thou may'ſt import *eternal* wealth;
And leave to *beggar'd* minds the *pearl* and *gold*.
Thy travels doſt thou boaſt o'er foreign realms?
Thou *ſtranger* to the *world*! thy tour *begin*;
Thy tour through *nature*'s univerſal orb.

Nature

Nature delineates her whole chart at large,
On ſoaring ſouls, that ſail among the ſpheres;
And *man* how purblind, if unknown the whole!
Who circles ſpacious *earth*, then travels *here*,
Shall own, he never was from *home* before!
Come, my * PROMETHEUS, from thy pointed rock
Of *falſe* ambition if unchain'd, we'll mount;
We'll, *innocently*, ſteal celeſtial fire,
And kindle our devotion at the *ſtars*;
A theft, that ſhall not chain, but ſet thee free.
Above our atmoſphere's inteſtine wars,
Rain's fountain-head, the magazine of hail;
Above the northern neſts of feather'd ſnows,
The brew of thunders, and the flaming forge
That forms the crooked lightning; 'bove the caves
Where infant tempeſts wait their growing wings,
And tune their tender voices to that roar,
Which ſoon, perhaps, ſhall ſhake a guilty world;
Above miſconſtru'd omens of the ſky,
Far-travell'd comets' calculated blaze;
Elance thy thought, and think of *more* than *man*.
Thy ſoul, till now, contracted, wither'd, ſhrunk,
Blighted by blaſts of *earth*'s unwholſome air,
Will bloſſom *here*; ſpread all her faculties
To theſe bright ardours; ev'ry pow'r unfold,
And riſe into ſublimities of thought.
Stars *teach*, as well as *ſhine*. At *nature*'s birth,
Thus their commiſſion ran—"Be kind to *man*."

* Night the Eighth.

Where

Where art thou, poor benighted traveller!
The *Stars* will light thee; though the *Moon* ſhould fail.
Where art thou, more benighted! more aſtray!
In ways immoral? The *Stars* call thee back;
And, if obey'd their counſel, ſet thee right.
This proſpect vaſt, what is it?—Weigh'd aright,
'Tis nature's ſyſtem of divinity,
And ev'ry ſtudent of the *Night* inſpires.
'Tis *elder* Scripture, writ by GOD's own hand:
Scripture authentic! uncorrupt by man.
LORENZO! with my *Radius* (the rich gift
Of thought nocturnal!) I'll point out to thee
Its various leſſons; ſome that may ſurpriſe
An un-adept in myſteries of NIGHT;
Little, perhaps, expected in *her* ſchool,
Nor thought to grow on planet, or on ſtar.
Bulls, lions, ſcorpions, monſters here we feign;
Ourſelves more monſtrous, not to ſee what here
Exiſts *indeed*;—a lecture to mankind.
What read we *here?*—Th' exiſtence of a GOD?
Yes; and of other beings, man above;
Natives of *Æther!* Sons of higher climes!
And, what may move LORENZO's wonder more,
ETERNITY is written in the ſkies.
And whoſe eternity?—LORENZO! *Thine*;
Mankind's eternity. Nor FAITH alone,
VIRTUE grows here; *here* ſprings the ſov'reign cure
Of almoſt ev'ry vice; but chiefly *Thine*;
Wrath, *Pride*, *Ambition*, and *impure Deſire*.
LORENZO! Thou canſt wake at midnight too,

Though not on *Morals* bent: *Ambition, Pleaſure!*
Thoſe tyrants I for Thee ſo * lately fought,
Afford their harraſs'd ſlaves but ſlender reſt.
Thou, to whom midnight is *immoral* noon,
And the ſun's noon-tide blaze, prime dawn of day;
Not by thy climate, but capricious crime,
Commencing one of our *Antipodes!*
In thy nocturnal rove, one moment halt,
'Twixt ſtage and ſtage, of riot, and cabal;
And lift thine eye, (if bold an eye to lift,
If bold to meet the face of injur'd heav'n)
To yonder ſtars: For other ends they ſhine,
Than to light revellers from ſhame to ſhame,
And, thus, be made accomplices in guilt.
Why from yon arch, that infinite of ſpace,
With infinite of lucid orbs replete,
Which ſet the living firmament on fire,
At the firſt glance, in ſuch an overwhelm
Of wonderful, on man's aſtoniſh'd ſight,
Ruſhes OMNIPOTENCE?—To curb our *Pride*;
Our *Reaſon* rouſe, and lead it to that Power,
Whoſe love lets down theſe ſilver chains of light;
To draw up man's *Ambition* to *Himſelf*,
And bind our *chaſte Affections* to His throne.
Thus the three virtues, leaſt alive on earth,
And welcom'd on heav'n's coaſt with moſt applauſe,
An *Humble*, *Pure*, and *Heav'nly-minded* heart,
Are *here* inſpir'd:—And canſt thou gaze too long?
Nor ſtands thy *Wrath* depriv'd of its reproof,

* Night the eighth.

Or

Or un-upbraided by this radiant choir.
The planets of each ſyſtem repreſent
Kind neighbours; mutual amity prevails;
Sweet interchange of rays, receiv'd, return'd;
Enlight'ning, and enlighten'd! All, at once,
Attracting, and attracted! Patriot like,
None ſins againſt the welfare of the whole;
But their reciprocal, unſelfiſh aid,
Affords an emblem of *Millennial* love.
Nothing in nature, much leſs *conſcious* being,
Was e'er created ſolely for Itſelf:
Thus man his *ſov'reign* duty learns in this
Material picture of benevolence.
And know, of all our ſupercilious race,
Thou moſt inflammable! Thou waſp of men!
Man's angry heart, *inſpected*, would be found
As rightly ſet, as are the ſtarry ſpheres;
'Tis *Nature*'s ſtructure, broke by ſtubborn *Will*,
Breeds all that un-celeſtial diſcord *there*.
Wilt thou not feel the bias *Nature* gave?
Canſt thou deſcend from converſe with the ſkies,
And ſeize thy brother's throat?—For what—a *Clod*,
An inch of *Earth*? The *Planets* cry, "Forbear,"
They chaſe our double darkneſs; *Nature*'s gloom,
And (kinder ſtill!) our *intellectual* night.
And ſee, *Day*'s amiable ſiſter ſends
Her invitation, in the ſofteſt rays
Of mitigated luſtre; courts thy ſight,
Which ſuffers from her tyrant-brother's blaze.
Night grants thee the full freedom of the ſkies,

Nor rudely reprimands thy lifted eye;
With *Gain*, and *Joy*, ſhe bribes thee to be wiſe.
Night opes the nobleſt ſcenes, and ſheds an awe,
Which gives thoſe venerable ſcenes full weight,
And deep reception, in th' intender'd heart;
While light peeps through the darkneſs, like a ſpy;
And darkneſs ſhews its grandeur by the light.
Nor is the *Profit* greater than the *Joy*,
If human hearts at glorious objects glow,
And admiration can inſpire delight.
What ſpeak I more, than I, This moment, feel?
With pleaſing ſtupor firſt the ſoul is ſtruck
(Stupor ordain'd to make her truly wiſe!):
Then into tranſport ſtarting from her trance,
With love, and admiration, how ſhe glows!
This gorgeous apparatus! This diſplay!
This oſtentation of creative power!
This theatre!—what eye can take it in?
By what divine enchantment was it rais'd,
For minds of the firſt magnitude to launch
In endleſs ſpeculation, and adore?
One ſun by day, by night *Ten thouſand* ſhine;
And light us deep into the DEITY;
How boundleſs in magnificence and might!
O what a confluence of ethereal fires,
Form urns un-number'd, down the ſteep of heav'n,
Streams to a point, and centres in my ſight!
Nor tarries *there*; I feel it at my *Heart*.
My heart, at once, it humbles, and exalts;
Lays it in duſt, and calls it to the ſkies.

Who

Who ſees it unexalted? or unaw'd?
Who ſees it, and can ſtop at what is ſeen?
Material offspring of OMNIPOTENCE!
Inanimate, All-animating birth!
Work worthy *Him* who made it! Worthy praiſe!
All praiſe! praiſe *more* than human! nor deny'd
Thy praiſe *Divine!*—But tho' man, drown'd in ſleep,
With-holds his homage, not *alone* I wake;
Bright legions ſwarm unſeen, and ſing, unheard
By mortal ear, the glorious Architect,
In This His univerſal temple hung
With luſtres, with innumerable lights,
That ſhed religion on the ſoul; at once,
The *Temple*, and the *Preacher!* O how loud
It calls devotion! genuine growth of *Night!*
Devotion! daughter of aſtronomy!
An *undevout* aſtronomer is *mad.*
True; All things ſpeak a GOD; but in the ſmall,
Men trace out *Him*; in great, *He* ſeizes man;
Seizes, and elevates, and wraps, and fills
With new inquiries, 'mid aſſociates new.
Tell me, ye ſtars! ye planets! tell me, all
Ye ſtarr'd, and planeted, inhabitants! What is it?
What are theſe ſons of wonder? Say, proud arch,
(Within whoſe azure palaces they dwell)
Built with divine ambition! in diſdain
Of limit built! built in the taſte of heaven!
Vaſt concave! ample dome! waſt thou deſign'd
A meet apartment for the DEITY?—
Not ſo; That thought alone thy ſtate impairs,

Thy *Lofty* ſinks, and ſhallows thy *Profound*,
And ſtreightens thy *Diffuſive*; dwarfs the whole,
And makes an univerſe an *Orrery*.
But when I drop mine eye, and look on man,
Thy right regain'd, thy grandeur is reſtor'd,
O *Nature!* wide flies off th' expanding round.
As when whole magazines, at once, are fir'd,
The ſmitten air is hollow'd by the blow;
The vaſt diſploſion diſſipates the clouds;
Shock'd æther's billows daſh the diſtant ſkies;
Thus (but far more) th' expanding round flies off,
And leaves a mighty void, a ſpacious womb,
Might teem with new creation; re-inflam'd
Thy luminaries triumph, and aſſume
Divinity themſelves. Nor was it ſtrange,
Matter high-wrought to ſuch ſurpriſing pomp,
Such godlike glory, ſtole the ſtyle of gods,
From ages dark, obtuſe, and ſteep'd in *Senſe*;
For, ſure, to *Senſe*, they truly are divine,
And half-abſolv'd idolatry from guilt;
Nay, turn'd it into virtue. Such it *was*
In thoſe, who put forth all they had of *Man*
Unloſt, to lift their thought, nor mounted higher;
But, weak of wing, on planets perch'd; and thought
What was their higheſt, muſt be their ador'd.
But They how *weak*, who could no higher mount?
And are there, then, LORENZO! Thoſe, to whom
Unſeen, and Unexiſtent, are the Same?
And if Incomprehenſible is join'd,
Who dare pronounce it madneſs, to *believe?*

Why

Why has the mighty BUILDER thrown aſide
All meaſure in His work; ſtretch'd out His line
So far, and ſpread amazement o'er the whole?
Then (as He took delight in wide extremes),
Deep in the boſom of His univerſe,
Dropt down that *reas'ning* mite, that inſect, *Man*,
To crawl, and gaze, and wonder at the ſcene? ——
That man might ne'er preſume to plead amazement
For diſbelief of wonders in *Himſelf*.
Shall GOD be leſs miraculous, than what
His hand has form'd? Shall *Myſteries* deſcend
From *Un-myſterious?* Things more Elevate,
Be more familiar? Uncreated lie
More obvious than Created, to the graſp
Of human thought? The *more* of Wonderful
Is heard in *Him*, the *more* we ſhould aſſent.
Could we conceive *Him*, GOD He could not be;
Or *He* not GOD, or *we* could not be *Men*.
A GOD alone can comprehend a GOD;
Man's diſtance how immenſe! On *ſuch* a theme,
Know This, LORENZO! (ſeem it ne'er ſo ſtrange)
Nothing can *ſatisfy*, but what *confounds*;
Nothing, but what *aſtoniſhes*, is *true*.
The ſcene thou ſeeſt, atteſts the truth I ſing,
And ev'ry ſtar ſheds light upon thy creed.
Theſe ſtars, this furniture, this coſt of heaven,
If but *reported*, thou hadſt ne'er believ'd;
But thine *Eye* tells thee, the *Romance* is true.
The grand of nature is th' Almighty's oath,
In *Reaſon*'s court, to ſilence *Unbelief*.

How my mind, op'ning at this ſcene, imbibes
The moral emanations of the ſkies,
While nought, perhaps, LORENZO leſs admires!
Has the Great Sov'reign ſent ten thouſand worlds
To tell us, *He* reſides above them All,
In glory's unapproachable receſs?
And dare *Earth*'s bold inhabitants deny
The ſumptuous, the magnific embaſſy
A moment's audience? Turn we, nor will hear
From whom they come, or what they would impart
For man's emolument; ſole cauſe that ſtoops
Their grandeur to man's eye? LORENZO! rouſe;
Let thought, awaken'd, take the lightning's wing,
And glance from eaſt to weſt, from pole to pole.
Who ſees, but is confounded, or convinc'd?
Renounces *Reaſon*, or a GOD adores?
Mankind was ſent into the world to *ſee*:
Sight gives the ſcience needful to their peace;
That obvious ſcience aſks *ſmall* learning's aid.
Wouldſt thou on metaphyſic pinions ſoar?
Or wound thy patience amid logic thorns?
Or travel hiſtory's enormous round?
Nature no ſuch hard taſk injoins: She gave
A make to man directive of his thought;
A make ſet upright, pointing to the ſtars,
As who ſhall ſay, "Read thy chief leſſon there."
Too late to read this manuſcript of heaven,
When, like a parchment-ſcroll, ſhrunk up by flames,
It folds LORENZO's leſſon from his ſight.
Leſſon how various! Not the GOD alone,

I ſee

I ſee His *Miniſters*; I ſee, diffus'd
In radiant orders, eſſences ſublime,
Of various offices, of various plume,
In heav'nly liveries, diſtinctly clad,
Azure, green, purple, pearl, or downy gold,
Or all commix'd; they ſtand, with wings outſpread,
Liſt'ning to catch the Maſter's leaſt command,
And fly through *Nature*, ere the moment ends;
Numbers innumerable!—Well conceiv'd
By *Pagan*, and by *Chriſtian!* O'er each ſphere
Preſides an angel, to direct its courſe,
And feed, or fan, its flames; or to diſcharge
Other high truſts unknown. For who can ſee
Such pomp of matter, and imagine, *Mind*,
For which *alone* Inanimate was made,
More ſparingly diſpens'd? That nobler ſon,
Far liker the great SIRE!—'Tis thus the ſkies
Inform us of ſuperiors numberleſs,
As much, in *Excellence*, above mankind,
As above *Earth*, in *Magnitude*, the *Spheres*.
Theſe, as a cloud of witneſſes, hang o'er us;
In a throng'd theatre are all our deeds;
Perhaps, a thouſand demigods deſcend
On ev'ry beam we ſee, to walk with men.
Aweful reflection! Strong reſtraint from ill!
Yet, *here*, our virtue finds ſtill ſtronger aid
From theſe ethereal glories *Senſe* ſurveys.
Something, like magic, ſtrikes from this blue vault;
With juſt attention is it view'd? We feel
A ſudden ſuccour, unimplor'd, unthought;

Nature herſelf does half the work of *Man.*
Seas, rivers, mountains, foreſts, deſarts, rocks,
The promontory's height, the depth profound
Of ſubterranean, excavated grots,
Black brow'd, and vaulted high, and yawning wide
From *Nature*'s ſtructure, or the ſcoop of *Time*;
If ample of dimenſion, vaſt of ſize,
Ev'n *Theſe* an aggrandizing impulſe give;
Of ſolemn thought enthuſiaſtic heights
Ev'n *Theſe* infuſe.—But what of vaſt in *Theſe?*
Nothing;—or we muſt own the ſkies forgot.
Much leſs in *Art.*—Vain *Art!* Thou pigmy power!
How doſt thou ſwell and ſtrut, with human pride,
To ſhew thy littleneſs! What childiſh toys,
Thy watry columns ſquirted to the clouds!
Thy baſon'd rivers, and impriſon'd ſeas!
Thy mountains moulded into forms of men!
Thy hundred-gated *Capitals!* or Thoſe
Where three days travel left us much to ride;
Gazing on miracles by mortals wrought,
Arches triumphal, theatres immenſe,
Or nodding *Gardens* pendent in mid-air!
Or *Temples* proud to meet their Gods half-way!
Yet *Theſe* affect us in no common kind.
What then the force of ſuch ſuperior ſcenes?
Enter a temple, it will ſtrike an awe:
What awe from This the DEITY has built?
A *Good Man* ſeen, though ſilent, counſel gives:
The touch'd ſpectator wiſhes to be wiſe:
In a bright mirror His own hands have made,

Here

Here we ſee ſomething like the face of GOD.
Seems it not then enough, to ſay, LORENZO!
To man abandon'd, "*Haſt thou ſeen the ſkies?*"
And yet, ſo thwarted nature's kind deſign
By daring man, he makes her ſacred awe
(That guard from ill) his ſhelter, his temptation
To more than common guilt, and quite inverts
Celeſtial art's intent. The trembling ſtars
See crimes gigantic, ſtalking through the gloom
With front erect, that hide their head by day,
And making night ſtill *darker* by their deeds.
Slumb'ring in covert, till the ſhades deſcend,
Rapine and *Murder*, link'd, now prowl for prey.
The miſer earths his treaſure; and the thief,
Watching the mole, half-beggars him ere morn.
Now *Plots*, and foul *Conſpiracies*, awake;
And, muffling up their horrors from the moon,
Havock and devaſtation they prepare,
And kingdoms tott'ring in the field of blood.
Now ſons of riot in mid-revel rage.
What ſhall I do?—Suppreſs it? or proclaim?—
Why *ſleeps* the thunder? Now, LORENZO! now,
His beſt friend's couch the rank adulterer
Aſcends ſecure; and laughs at gods and men.
Prepoſt'rous madmen, void of fear or ſhame,
Lay their crimes bare to theſe chaſte eyes of heaven;
Yet ſhrink, and ſhudder, at a mortal's ſight.
Were moon, and ſtars, for villains *only* made?
To *guide*, yet *ſcreen* them, with tenebrious light?
No; they were made to faſhion the ſublime
Of human hearts, and *wiſer* make the *Wiſe*.

Thoſe ends were anſwer'd once; when mortals liv'd
Of ſtronger wing, of aquiline aſcent
In theory ſublime. O how unlike
Thoſe vermin of the night, this moment ſung,
Who crawl on *Earth*, and on her venom feed!
Thoſe antient ſages, *Human* ſtars! They met
Their brothers of the *Skies*, at midnight hour;
Their counſel aſk'd; and, what they aſk'd, *obey'd*.
The *Stagirite*, and PLATO, He who drank
The poiſon'd bowl, and He of *Tuſculum*,
With him of *Corduba* (immortal names!)
In theſe unbounded, and *Elyſian*, walks,
An area fit for GODS, and Godlike men,
They took their nightly round, through radiant paths
By *Seraphs* trod; inſtructed, chiefly, thus,
To tread in Their bright footſteps here below;
To walk in worth ſtill brighter than the ſkies.
There they contracted their contempt of *Earth*;
Of hopes eternal kindled, *There*, the fire;
There, as in near approach, they glow'd, and grew
(Great viſitants!) more intimate with GOD,
More worth to *Men*, more joyous to *Themſelves*.
Through *various Virtues*, they, with ardor, ran
The *Zodiac* of their learn'd, illuſtrious lives.

In *Chriſtian* hearts, O for a *Pagan* zeal!
A *needful*, but *opprobrious* pray'r! As much
Our *Ardor* Leſs, as Greater is our *Light*.
How monſtrous This in *Morals!* Scarce more ſtrange
Would this *Phænomenon* in nature ſtrike,
A *Sun*, that froze her, or a *Star*, that warm'd.

What taught these heroes of the moral world?
To these thou giv'st thy *Praise*, give *Credit* too.
These doctors ne'er were pension'd to deceive thee;
And *Pagan* tutors are thy taste.—They taught,
That, narrow views betray to misery:
That, wise it is to comprehend the whole:
That, *Virtue*, rose from *Nature*, ponder'd well,
The single base of *Virtue* built to heaven:
That GOD, and *Nature*, our attention claim:
That, *Nature* is the glass reflecting GOD,
As, by the *Sea*, reflected is the *Sun*,
Too glorious to be gaz'd on in his sphere:
That, *Mind immortal* loves *immortal* aims:
That, *boundless Mind* affects a *boundless Space*:
That vast surveys, and the sublime of things,
The soul assimilate, and make her great:
That, therefore, heav'n her glories, as a fund
Of inspiration, thus spreads out to man.
Such are their doctrines; *such* the *Night* inspir'd.
And what more true? What truth of greater weight?
The soul of man was made to walk the skies;
Delightful outlet of her prison *Here!*
There, disincumber'd from her chains, the ties
Of toys terrestrial, she can rove at large,
There, freely can respire, dilate, extend,
In full proportion let loose all her powers;
And, *undeluded*, grasp at something great.
Nor, as a stranger, does she wander there;
But, wonderful herself, through wonder strays;
Contemplating *their* grandeur, finds *her own*;
Dives deep in their œconomy divine,

Sits

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Sits high in Judgment on their various laws,
And, like a maſter, judges not amiſs.
Hence greatly pleas'd, and juſtly proud, the ſoul
Grows conſcious of her birth celeſtial; breathes
More life, more vigour, in her native air;
And feels herſelf *at home* amongſt the ſtars;
And, feeling, emulates her country's praiſe.
What call we, then, the firmament, LORENZO?—
As *Earth* the body, ſince, the *Skies* ſuſtain
The ſoul with food, that gives immortal life,
Call it, The noble paſture of the *Mind*;
Which there expatiates, ſtrengthens, and exults,
And riots through the luxuries of thought.
Call it, The Garden of the DEITY,
Bloſſom'd with ſtars, redundant in the growth
Of fruit ambroſial; *moral* fruit to man.
Call it, The breaſt-plate of the true High-prieſt,
Ardent with gems oracular, that give,
In points of higheſt moment, right reſponſe;
And ill neglected, if we prize our peace.
Thus, have we found a *true* aſtrology;
Thus, have we found a new, and noble ſenſe,
In which *alone* ſtars govern human fates.
O that the *Stars* (as ſome have feign'd) let fall
Bloodſhed, and havock, on embattled realms,
And reſcu'd *Monarchs* from ſo black a guilt!
BOURBON! this wiſh how gen'rous in a foe!
Wouldſt thou be great, wouldſt thou become a God,
And ſtick thy deathleſs name among the ſtars,
For mighty conqueſts on a needle's point?
Inſtead of forging chains for *foreigners*,
Baſtile thy *Tutor*: Grandeur all thy aim?

As yet thou know'ſt not what it is: How great,
How glorious, *then*, appears the *Mind* of man,
When in it all the ſtars, and planets, roll!
And what it *ſeems*, it *is*: *Great* objects make
Great minds, enlarging as their views enlarge;
Thoſe ſtill more Godlike, as *Theſe* more divine.
And *more* divine than *Theſe*, thou canſt not ſee.
Dazzled, o'er-pow'r'd, with the delicious draught
Of miſcellaneous ſplendors, how I reel
From thought to thought, inebriate, without end!
An *Eden*, this! a PARADISE *unloſt!*
I meet the DEITY in ev'ry view,
And tremble at my nakedneſs before him!
O that I could but reach the *Tree of Life!*
For *Here* it grows, unguarded from our taſte;
No *Flaming Sword* denies our entrance *Here*;
Would man but gather, he might *live for ever.*
LORENZO! much of *Moral* haſt thou ſeen.
Of curious arts art thou more fond? Then mark
The *Mathematic* glories of the ſkies,
In number, weight, and meaſure, all ordain'd.
LORENZO's boaſted builders, *Chance*, and *Fate*,
Are left to finiſh his aërial towers;
Wiſdom and *Choice*, their well-known characters
Here deep impreſs; and claim it for their own.
Though ſplendid all, no ſplendor void of uſe;
Uſe rivals *Beauty*; *Art* contends with *Power*;
No wanton waſte, amid effuſe expence;
The great OECONOMIST adjuſting all
To prudent pomp, magnificently wiſe.
How rich the proſpect! and for ever new!

And *neweſt* to the man that views it *moſt*;
For newer ſtill in infinite ſucceeds.
Then, theſe aërial racers, O how ſwift!
How the ſhaft loiters from the ſtrongeſt ſtring?
Spirit alone can diſtance the career.
Orb above orb aſcending without end!
Circle in circle, without end, inclos'd!
Wheel, within wheel; EZEKIEL! like to thine!
Like thine, it ſeems a viſion or a dream;
Though *ſeen*, we labour to believe it *true!*
What involution! what extent! what ſwarms
Of worlds, that laugh at *Earth!* immenſely great!
Immenſely diſtant from each other's ſpheres!
What, then, the wond'rous *Space* thro' which they roll?
At once it quite ingulphs all human thought;
'Tis comprehenſion's abſolute defeat.
Nor think thou ſeeſt a wild diſorder here;
Through this illuſtrious chaos to the ſight,
Arrangement neat, and chaſteſt order, reign.
The path preſcrib'd, inviolably kept,
Upbraids the lawleſs ſallies of mankind.
Worlds, ever thwarting, never interfere;
What knots are ty'd! how ſoon are they diſſolv'd,
And ſet the ſeeming marry'd planets free!
They rove for ever, without error rove;
Confuſion unconfus'd! nor leſs admire
This tumult untumultuous; all on wing!
In motion, all! yet what profound repoſe!
What fervid action, yet no noiſe! as aw'd
To ſilence, by the preſence of their LORD;

O-

Or hush'd by *His* command, in love to man,
And bid let fall soft beams on human rest,
Restless themselves. On yon cœrulean plain,
In exultation to *Their* GOD, and *Thine*,
They dance, they sing eternal jubilee,
Eternal celebration of *His* praise.
But, since their *Song* arrives not at our ear,
Their *Dance* perplex'd exhibits to the sight
Fair *Hieroglyphic* of *His* peerless power.
Mark, how the *Labyrinthian* turns they take,
The circles intricate, and mystic maze,
Weave the grand cypher of *Omnipotence*;
To *Gods*, how great! how legible to *Man!*
Leaves so much wonder greater wonder still?
Where are the pillars that support the skies?
What more than *Atlantean* shoulder props
Th' incumbent load? What magic, what strange art,
In fluid air these pond'rous orbs sustains?
Who would not think them hung in golden chains?—
And so they are; in the high will of heaven,
Which fixes all; makes adamant of air,
Or air of adamant; makes all of nought,
Or nought of all; if *such* the dread decree.
Imagine from their deep foundations torn
The most gigantic sons of earth, the broad
And tow'ring *Alps*, all tost into the sea;
And, light as down, or volatile as air,
Their bulks enormous, dancing on the waves,
In time, and measure, exquisite; while all
The winds, in emulation of the spheres,

Tune

Tune their ſonorous inſtruments aloft;
The concert ſwell, and animate the ball.
Would this appear amazing? What, then, worlds,
In a far thinner element ſuſtain'd,
And acting the ſame part, with greater ſkill,
More rapid movement, and for nobleſt *Ends*?
More *obvious* ends to paſs, are not theſe ſtars
The ſeats majeſtic, proud imperial thrones,
On which angelic delegates of heaven,
At certain periods, as the SOV'REIGN nods,
Diſcharge high truſts of *Vengeance*, or of *Love*;
To clothe, in outward grandeur, grand deſign,
And acts moſt ſolemn ſtill more ſolemnize?
Ye CITIZENS of air! what ardent thanks,
What full effuſion of the grateful heart,
Is due from man indulg'd in ſuch a ſight!
A ſight ſo noble! and a ſight ſo kind!
It drops *new* truths at ev'ry *new* ſurvey!
Feels not LORENZO ſomething ſtir within,
That ſweeps away all period? As theſe ſpheres
Meaſure duration, they no leſs inſpire
The Godlike hope of ages without end.
The boundleſs *Space*, through which theſe rovers take
Their reſtleſs roam, ſuggeſts the ſiſter-thought
Of boundleſs *Time*. Thus, by kind *Nature*'s ſkill,
To man un-labour'd, that important gueſt,
ETERNITY, finds entrance at the *Sight*:
And an *Eternity*, for man ordain'd,
Or theſe his deſtin'd midnight counſellors,
The *Stars*, had never whiſper'd it to man.

NATURE

NATURE *informs*, but ne'er *inſults*, her ſons.
Could ſhe then kindle the moſt ardent wiſh
To *diſappoint* it?—That is blaſphemy.
Thus, of thy creed a ſecond article,
Momentous, as th' exiſtence of a GOD,
Is found (as I conceive) where rarely ſought;
And thou may'ſt read thy *Soul immortal*, Here.
Here, then, LORENZO! on theſe glories dwell;
Nor want the gilt, illuminated, roof,
That calls the wretched *Gay* to dark delights.
Aſſemblies?—This is one divinely bright;
Here, un-endanger'd in health, wealth, or fame,
Range through the faireſt, and the SULTAN ſcorn;
He, wiſe as *Thou*, no *Creſcent* holds ſo fair,
As that, which on his turbant awes a world;
And thinks the *Moon* is proud to copy him.
Look on her, and gain more than worlds can give,
A mind ſuperior to the charms of *Power*.
Thou muffled in deluſions of this life!
Can yonder *Moon* turn ocean in his bed,
From ſide to ſide, in conſtant ebb, and flow,
And purify from ſtench his watry realms?
And fails her *moral* influence? wants ſhe power
To turn LORENZO's ſtubborn tide of thought
From ſtagnating on *Earth*'s infected ſhore,
And purge from nuiſance his corrupted heart?
Fails her attraction when it draws to heaven?
Nay, and to what thou valu'ſt more, *Earth*'s joy?
Minds elevate, and panting for *Unſeen*,
And defecate from *Senſe*, alone obtain

Full

Full reliſh of exiſtence un-deflower'd,
The *Life* of life, the *Zeſt* of worldly bliſs:
All elſe on earth amounts—to what? To *This*:
"BAD to be *Suffer'd*; BLESSINGS to be *Left*:"
Earth's richeſt inventory boaſts no more.
Of higher ſcenes be, then, the call obey'd.
O let me gaze!—Of gazing there's no end.
O let me think!—Thought too is wilder'd *here*;
In mid-way flight imagination tires;
Yet ſoon re-prunes her wing to ſoar anew,
Her point unable to forbear, or gain;
So *great* the pleaſure, ſo *profound* the plan!
A banquet, this, where men, and angels, meet,
Eat the ſame *Manna*, mingle earth, and heaven.
How diſtant ſome of theſe nocturnal ſuns!
So diſtant (ſays the ſage) 'twere not abſurd
To doubt, if beams, ſet out at *Nature*'s birth,
Are yet arriv'd at this ſo foreign world;
Though nothing half ſo rapid as their flight.
An eye of awe and wonder let me roll,
And roll *for ever*: Who can ſatiate ſight
In *ſuch* a ſcene? in ſuch an ocean wide
Of deep aſtoniſhment? where depth, height, breadth,
Are loſt in their extremes; and where to count
The thick-ſown glories in this field of fire,
Perhaps a *Seraph*'s computation fails.
Now, go, *Ambition!* boaſt thy boundleſs might
In conqueſt, o'er the tenth part of a grain.
And yet LORENZO calls for miracles,
To give his tott'ring faith a ſolid baſe.

Why

Why call for leſs than is *already* thine?
Thou art no novice in theology;
What is a *Miracle?*—'Tis a reproach,
'Tis an implicit ſatire, on mankind;
And while it *ſatisfies*, it *cenſures* too.
To common ſenſe, great *Nature*'s courſe proclaims
A DEITY: When mankind falls aſleep,
A *Miracle* is ſent, as an alarm;
To wake the world, and prove *Him* o'er again,
By *recent* argument, but not more *ſtrong*.
Say, which imports more plenitude of power,
Or nature's laws to *fix*, or to *repeal?*
To *make* a ſun, or *ſtop* his mid career?
To countermand his orders, and ſend back
The flaming courier to the frighted *Eaſt*,
Warm'd, and aſtoniſh'd, at his ev'ning ray?
Or bid the *Moon*, as with her journey tir'd,
In *Ajalon*'s ſoft, flow'ry vale repoſe?
Great things are theſe; ſtill greater, to *create*.
From ADAM's bow'r look down thro' the whole train
Of miracles;—reſiſtleſs is their pow'r?
They do not, *can* not, more amaze the mind,
Than this, *call'd* un-miraculous ſurvey,
If *duly* weigh'd, if *rationally* ſeen,
If ſeen with *human* eyes. The *Brute*, indeed,
Sees nought but *Spangles* here; the *Fool*, no more.
Say'ſt thou, "The courſe of *Nature* governs all?
The *Courſe* of *Nature* is the *Art* of GOD.
The miracles thou call'ſt for, *This* atteſt;
For ſay, could *Nature Nature*'s courſe controul?

But,

But, miracles apart, who ſees HIM not,
Nature's CONTROULER, AUTHOR, GUIDE, and END?
Who turns his eye on *Nature*'s midnight face,
But muſt inquire—" What hand behind the ſcene,
" What arm Almighty, put theſe wheeling globes
" In motion, and wound up the vaſt machine?
" Who rounded in his palm theſe ſpacious orbs?
" Who bowl'd them flaming thro' the dark profound,
" Num'rous as glitt'ring gems of morning-dew,
" Or ſparks from populous cities in a blaze,
" And ſet the boſom of *Old Night* on fire?
" Peopled her deſart, and made horror ſmile?"
Or, if the military ſtyle delights thee,
(For ſtars have fought their battles, leagu'd with man)
" Who marſhals this bright hoſt? Enrolls their names?
" Appoints their poſts, their marches, and returns,
" Punctual, at ſtated periods? who diſbands
" Theſe vet'ran troops, their final duty done,
" If e'er diſbanded?"—HE, whoſe potent word,
Like the loud trumpet, levy'd firſt their powers
In *Night*'s inglorious empire, where they ſlept
In beds of darkneſs: arm'd them with fierce flames,
Arrang'd, and diſciplin'd, and cloath'd in gold;
And call'd them out of *Chaos* to the field,
Where now they war with *Vice* and *Unbelief*.
O let us join this army! joining theſe,
Will give us hearts intrepid, at that hour,
When *brighter* flames ſhall cut a *darker* night;
When theſe ſtrong demonſtrations of a GOD

Shall

Shall hide their heads, or tumble from their ſpheres,
And one *eternal* curtain cover all!
Struck at *that* thought, as new awak'd, I lift
A more enlighten'd eye, and read the ſtars
To man ſtill more propitious; and their aid
(Though guiltleſs of idolatry) implore;
Nor longer rob them of their nobleſt name.
O ye *Dividers of my Time!* Ye bright
Accomptants of my days, and months, and years,
In your fair Kalendar diſtinctly mark'd!
Since that authentic, radiant regiſter,
Though man inſpects it not, ſtands good againſt him;
Since *You*, and years, roll on, tho' man ſtands ſtill;
Teach me my days to number, and apply
My trembling heart to *Wiſdom*; now beyond
All ſhadow of excuſe for fooling on.
Age ſmooths our path to prudence; ſweeps aſide
The ſnares keen *Appetite*, and paſſion, ſpread
To catch ſtray ſouls; and woe to that grey head,
Whoſe *Folly* would undo, what *Age* has done!
Aid then, aid, all ye ſtars!—Much rather, THOU,
Great ARTIST! THOU, whoſe finger ſet aright
This exquiſite *Machine*, with all its *Wheels*,
Though intervolv'd, exact; and pointing out
Life's rapid, and irrevocable flight,
With ſuch an *Index* fair, as none can miſs,
Who lifts an eye, nor ſleeps till it is cloſ'd.
Open *mine* eye, dread DEITY! to read
The tacit doctrine of thy works; to ſee
Things as they *are*, un-alter'd through the glaſs

Of

Of worldly wiſhes. *Time, Eternity!*
('Tis theſe, miſ-meaſur'd, ruin all mankind)
Set them before me; let me lay them both
In equal ſcale, and learn their various weight.
Let *Time* appear a *Moment*, as it *is*;
And let *Eternity*'s full orb, at once,
Turn on my ſoul, and ſtrike it into heaven.
When ſhall I ſee far more than charms me now?
Gaze on creation's model in *Thy* breaſt
Unveil'd, nor wonder at the tranſcript more?
When this vile, foreign, duſt, which ſmothers all
That travel *Earth*'s deep vale, ſhall I ſhake off?
When ſhall my ſoul her incarnation quit,
And, re-adopted to thy bleſt embrace,
Obtain her *Apotheoſis* in THEE?
Doſt think, LORENZO, this is wand'ring wide?
No; 'tis directly ſtriking at the mark;
To wake thy *dead Devotion** was my point;
And how I bleſs *Night*'s conſecrating ſhades,
Which to a *Temple* turn an *Univerſe*;
Fill us with great ideas, full of heaven,
And antidote the peſtilential earth!
In ev'ry ſtorm, that either frowns, or falls,
What an aſylum has the ſoul in pray'r!
And what a Fane is *This*, in which to pray!
And what a GOD muſt dwell in ſuch a Fane!
O what a genius muſt inform the ſkies!
And is LORENZO's ſalamander-heart
Cold, and untouch'd, amid theſe ſacred fires?
O ye nocturnal ſparks! Ye glowing embers,

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On

On heav'n's broad hearth! who burn, or burn no more,
Who blaze, or die, as Great JEHOVAH's breath
Or blows you, or forbears; aſſiſt my ſong;
Pour your whole influence; exorciſe his heart,
So long poſſeſt; and bring him back to *Man*.
And is LORENZO a demurrer *ſtill?*
Pride in thy parts provokes thee to conteſt
Truths, which, conteſted, put thy *Parts* to ſhame.
Nor ſhame they more LORENZO's *Head* than *Heart*,
A *faithleſs* heart, how deſpicably ſmall!
Too ſtreight, aught great, or gen'rous, to receive!
Fill'd with an atom! fill'd, and foul'd, with *Self!*
And Self miſtaken! Self, that laſts an hour!
Inſtincts and *Paſſions*, of the nobler kind,
Lie ſuffocated there; or *They* alone,
Reaſon apart, would wake high hope; and open,
To raviſh'd thought, that *Intellectual* ſphere,
Where, *Order*, *Wiſdom*, *Goodneſs*, *Providence*,
Their endleſs miracles of love diſplay,
And promiſe all the truly great deſire.
The mind that would be *happy*, muſt be *great*;
Great, in its *wiſhes*; great, in its *ſurveys*.
Extended views a narrow mind extend;
Puſh out its corrugate, expanſive make,
Which, ere long, *more* than planets ſhall embrace.
A man of *Compaſs* makes a man of *Worth*;
Divine contemplate, and become *Divine*.
As man was made for glory, and for bliſs,
All littleneſs is in approach to woe;
Open thy boſom, ſet thy wiſhes wide,

And let in *Manhood*; let in *Happineſs*;
Admit the boundleſs theatre of thought
From nothing, up to GOD; which makes a *Man*.
Take GOD from *Nature*, nothing great is left;
Man's mind is in a pit, and nothing ſees;
Man's heart is in a jakes, and loves the mire.
Emerge from thy profound; erect thine eye;
See thy diſtreſs! how cloſe art thou beſieg'd!
Beſieg'd by *Nature*, the proud ſceptic's foe!
Inclos'd by theſe innumerable worlds,
Sparkling conviction on the darkeſt mind,
As in a golden net of PROVIDENCE.
How art thou caught, ſure captive of belief!
From this thy bleſt captivity, what art,
What blaſphemy to reaſon, ſets thee free!
This ſcene is heav'n's indulgent violence:
Canſt thou bear up againſt this tide of glory?
What is earth boſom'd in theſe ambient orbs,
But, faith in GOD impos'd, and preſs'd on man?
Dar'ſt thou ſtill litigate thy deſp'rate *cauſe*,
Spite of theſe num'rous, aweful, *witneſſes*,
And doubt the *depoſition* of the ſkies?
O how laborious is thy way to ruin!
Laborious! 'tis *impracticable* quite;
To ſink beyond a *doubt*, in this debate,
With all his weight of wiſdom and of will,
And crime flagitious, I defy a fool.
Some wiſh they *did*; but *no* man *diſbelieves*.
GOD is a *Spirit*; *Spirit* cannot ſtrike
Theſe groſs, material organs; GOD by man

As much is ſeen, as *Man* a GOD can ſee,
In theſe aſtoniſhing exploits of power.
What order, beauty, motion, diſtance, ſize!
Concertion of deſign, how exquiſite!
How complicate, in their divine police!
Apt means! great ends! conſent to gen'ral good!—
Each attribute of theſe *material* gods,
So long (and that with ſpecious pleas) ador'd,
A ſep'rate conqueſt gains o'er rebel thought;
And leads in triumph the whole mind of man.
LORENZO! this may ſeem *harangue* to thee;
Such all is apt to ſeem, that thwarts our will.
And doſt thou, then, demand a *ſimple* proof
Of this great maſter moral of the ſkies,
Unſkill'd, or diſ-inclin'd, to read it *there?*
Since 'tis the baſis, and all drops without it,
Take it, in one compact, unbroken chain.
Such proof inſiſts on an attentive ear;
'Twill not make one amid a mob of thoughts,
And, for thy notice, ſtruggle with the world.
Retire;—— the *world* ſhut out;—— thy thoughts call [home;—
Imagination's airy wing repreſs;——
Lock up thy *Senſes*;—let no *Paſſion* ſtir;—
Wake all to *Reaſon*;—let *her* reign alone;
Then, in thy *Soul*'s deep ſilence, and the depth
Of *Nature*'s ſilence, midnight, thus inquire,
As *I* have done; and ſhall inquire no more.
In nature's channel, thus the queſtions run.
"What am I? and from *Whence?*—I nothing know,
"But that I *am*; and, ſince I *am*, conclude

" Something *Eternal:* Had there e'er been *Nought*,
" *Nought* ſtill had been: *Eternal* there *muſt* be.—
" But *what* eternal?—Why not *Human Race?*
" And ADAM's anceſtors without an end?—
" That's hard to be conceiv'd; ſince ev'ry link
" Of that long-chain'd ſucceſſion is ſo frail;
" Can ev'ry *Part depend*, and not the *Whole?*
" Yet grant it true; *new* difficulties riſe;
" I'm ſtill quite out at ſea; nor ſee the ſhore.
" Whence *Earth*, and theſe bright *Orbs?*—*Eternal* too?—
" Grant *Matter* was eternal; ſtill theſe *Orbs*
" Would want ſome other father;—much deſign
" Is ſeen in all their *Motions*, all their *Makes*;
" *Deſign* implies *Intelligence*, and *Art*;
" *That* can't be from *Themſel-ves*—or *Man*; *That* art
" Man ſcarce can comprehend, could man beſtow?
" And nothing greater yet allow'd than *Man.*—
" Who, *Motion*, foreign to the ſmalleſt grain,
" Shot through vaſt maſſes of enormous weight?
" Who bid brute *Matter's* reſtive lump aſſume
" Such various forms, and gave it wings to fly?
" Has matter *innate* motion? then each atom,
" Aſſerting its indiſputable right
" To dance, would form an univerſe of duſt:
" Has matter *none?* Then whence theſe glorious forms
" And boundleſs flights, from *Shapeleſs*, and *Repos'd?*
" Has matter *more* than motion? Has it thought,
" Judgment, and genius? Is it deeply learn'd
" In *Mathematics?* Has it fram'd *ſuch* laws,
" Which but to gueſs, a NEWTON made immortal?—

" If

" If ſo, how each *ſage* atom laughs at me,
" Who think a *Clod* inferior to a *Man!*
" If art, to form; and counſel, to conduct;
" And that with greater far, than human ſkill;
" Reſides not in each block;—a GODHEAD reigns.—
" Grant, then, inviſible, eternal, MIND;
" *That* granted, all is ſolv'd.—But, granting that,
" Draw I not o'er me a ſtill darker cloud?
" Grant I not that which I can ne'er conceive?
" A being without origin, or end!—
" Hail, human liberty! There is no GOD—
" Yet, Why? On either ſcheme that knot ſubſiſts;
" Subſiſt it *muſt*, in GOD, or *Human Race*;
" If in the laſt, how many knots beſide,
" Indiſſoluble all?—Why chuſe it *There*,
" Where, choſen, ſtill ſubſiſt ten thouſand more?
" Reject it, where, *That* choſen, all the reſt
" Diſpers'd, leave *Reaſon*'s whole horizon clear?
" This is not reaſon's dictate; *Reaſon* ſays,
" Cloſe with the ſide where *One* grain turns the ſcale;
" What vaſt preponderance is here! can reaſon
" With louder voice exclaim—*Believe a* GOD?
" And *Reaſon* heard, is the ſole mark of man.
" What things impoſſible muſt man think true,
" On any other ſyſtem! and how ſtrange
" To *diſbelieve*, through mere credulity!"

If, in this chain, LORENZO finds no flaw,
Let it for ever bind him to *Belief*.
And where the link, in which a flaw he finds?
And, if a GOD there is, that GOD how great!

How great that POW'R, whoſe providential care
Thro' theſe bright orbs' dark centres darts a ray!
Of *Nature* univerſal threads the whole!
And hangs *Creation*, like a precious gem,
Though little, on the footſtool of his throne!
That little gem, how large! A weight let fall
From a fixt ſtar, in ages can it reach
This diſtant *Earth!* Say, then, LORENZO! where,
Where, ends this mighty building? Where, begin
The ſuburbs of Creation? Where, the wall
Whoſe battlements look o'er into the vale
Of non-exiſtence? NOTHING's ſtrange abode!
Say, at what point of ſpace JEHOVAH dropp'd
His ſlacken'd *Line*, and laid his *Balance* by;
Weigh'd *Worlds*, and meaſur'd *Infinite*, no more?
Where, rears His *terminating Pillar* high
Its extra-mundane head? and ſays, to gods,
In characters illuſtrious as the ſun,
I ſtand, the plan's proud period; I pronounce
The work accompliſh'd; the Creation clos'd:
Shout, all ye gods! nor ſhout ye gods alone;
Of all that lives, or, if devoid of life,
That reſts, or rolls, ye heights, and depths reſound!
Reſound! reſound! ye depths, and heights, reſound!
Hard are thoſe queſtions!—Anſwer *harder* ſtill.
Is *This* the ſole exploit, the ſingle birth,
The ſolitary ſon of *Pow'r Divine?*
Or has th' Almighty FATHER, with a breath,
Impregnated the womb of diſtant *Space?*
Has *He* not bid, in various provinces,

Brother-

Brother-Creations the dark bowels burſt
Of *Night* primæval; barren, now, no more?
And *He* the central ſun, tranſpiercing all
Thoſe *Giant-Generations*, which diſport,
And dance, as *Motes*, in his meridian ray;
That ray withdrawn, benighted, or abſorb'd,
In that *Abyſs of Horror*, whence they ſprung;
While *Chaos* triumphs, repoſſeſt of all
Rival *Creation* raviſh'd from his throne?
CHAOS! of *Nature* both the womb, and grave!
Think'ſt thou my ſcheme, LORENZO, ſpreads too wide?
Is this *extravagant?*—No; this is *juſt*;
Juſt, in *conjecture*, though 'twere falſe in *fact*.
If 'tis an error, 'tis an error ſprung
From noble root, high thought of the MOST-HIGH.
But wherefore error? Who can prove it ſuch?—
He that can ſet OMNIPOTENCE a bound.
Can man *conceive* beyond what GOD can *do?*
Nothing, but *quite Impoſſible* is *hard*.
He ſummons into being, with like eaſe,
A whole *Creation*, and a ſingle *Grain*.
Speaks he the word? a thouſand worlds are born!
A Thouſand worlds? there's ſpace for Millions more;
And in what ſpace can his great *Fiat* fail?
Condemn me not, cold critic! but indulge
The warm *Imagination:* Why condemn?
Why not indulge ſuch thoughts, as ſwell our hearts
With fuller admiration of *That Power*,
Who gives our hearts with ſuch high thoughts to ſwell?
Why not indulge in *His* augmented praiſe?

Darts not *His* glory a ſtill brighter ray,
The leſs is left to *Chaos*, and the realms
Of hideous *Night*, where *Fancy* ſtrays aghaſt;
And, though moſt *talkative*, makes no *report?*
Still ſeems my thought enormous? Think again;—
Experience 'ſelf ſhall aid thy lame belief.
Glaſſes (that revelation to the ſight!)
Have they not led us in the deep diſcloſe
Of fine-ſpun *Nature*, exquiſitely *ſmall*,
And, though *demonſtrated*, ſtill *ill-conceiv'd?*
If, then, on the reverſe, the mind would mount
In *Magnitude*, what mind can mount too far,
To keep the balance, and creation *peiſe?*
Defect alone can err on ſuch a theme;
What is too great, if we the *Cauſe* ſurvey?
Stupendous ARCHITECT! THOU, THOU art all!
My ſoul flies up and down in thoughts of THEE,
And finds herſelf but at the centre ſtill!
I AM, thy name! *Exiſtence*, all *Thine own!*
Creation's nothing; flatter'd much, if ſtyl'd
"*The thin, the fleeting Atmoſphere of* GOD."
O for the voice—of what? of whom?—What voice
Can anſwer to my wants, in *ſuch* aſcent,
As dares to deem one univerſe too ſmall?
Tell me, LORENZO! (for now *Fancy* glows,
Fir'd in the vortex of Almighty power)
Is not this home creation, in the map
Of univerſal *Nature*, as a ſpeck,
Like fair BRITANNIA in our little ball;
Exceeding fair, and glorious, for its ſize,

But,

But, elſewhere, far out-meaſur'd, far outſhone?
In *Fancy* (for the *fact* beyond us lies)
Canſt thou not figure it, an *Iſle*, almoſt
Too ſmall for notice, in the *Vaſt* of being;
Sever'd by mighty ſeas of *un-built* ſpace
From other *realms*; from ample *Continents*
Of higher life, where nobler natives dwell;
Leſs *Northern*, leſs remote from DEITY,
Glowing beneath the *Line* of the SUPREME;
Where ſouls in excellence make haſte, put forth
Luxuriant growths; nor the late autumn wait
Of *Human* worth, but ripen ſoon to gods?
Yet why drown *Fancy* in ſuch depths as theſe?
Return, preſumptuous rover! and confeſs
The bounds of man; nor blame them, as too ſmall.
Enjoy we not full ſcope in what is *ſeen?*
Full ample the dominions of the ſun!
Full glorious to behold! How far, how wide,
The matchleſs monarch, from his flaming throne,
Laviſh of luſtre, throws his beams about him,
Farther, and faſter, than a thought can fly,
And feeds his planets with eternal fires!
This *Heliopolis*, by greater far,
Than the proud tyrant of the *Nile*, was built;
And *He* alone, who built it, can deſtroy.
Beyond *this City*, why ſtrays human thought?
One wonderful, enough for man to know!
One infinite! enough for man to range!
One firmament, enough for man to read!
O what voluminous inſtruction here!

What page of wiſdom is deny'd him? None;
If learning his chief leſſon makes him wiſe.
Nor is *Inſtruction*, here, our only gain;
There dwells a noble *pathos* in the ſkies,
Which warms our paſſions, proſelytes our hearts.
How eloquently ſhines the glowing pole!
With what authority it gives its charge,
Remonſtrating great truths in ſtyle ſublime,
Though ſilent, loud! heard earth around; above
The planets heard; and not unheard in hell;
Hell has her wonder, though too proud to praiſe.
Is *Earth*, then, more infernal? Has ſhe thoſe,
Who neither *praiſe* (LORENZO!) nor *admire?*
LORENZO's admiration, pre-engag'd,
Ne'er aſk'd the *Moon* one queſtion; never held
Leaſt correſpondence with a ſingle ſtar;
Ne'er rear'd an altar to the *Queen of Heaven*
Walking in brightneſs; or her train ador'd.
Their *ſublunary* rivals have long ſince
Engroſs'd his whole devotion; *Stars* malign,
Which made the fond *Aſtronomer* run mad;
Darken his *intellect*, corrupt his *heart*;
Cauſe him to ſacrifice his fame and peace
To momentary madneſs, call'd delight.
Idolater, more groſs than ever kiſs'd
The lifted hand to LUNA, or pour'd out
The blood to JOVE!——O THOU, to whom belongs
All ſacrifice! O Thou Great JOVE unfeign'd!
DIVINE INSTRUCTOR! Thy *firſt* volume, *This*,
For *Man's* peruſal; All in CAPITALS!

In

In *Moon*, and *Stars* (heav'n's golden alphabet!)
Emblaz'd to ſeize the ſight; who *runs*, may *read*;
Who *reads*, can *underſtand*. 'Tis unconfin'd
To *Chriſtian* land, or *Jewry*; fairly writ,
In language univerſal, to MANKIND:
A language, Lofty to the learn'd: yet Plain
To thoſe that feed the flock, or guide the plough,
Or, from his huſk, ſtrike out the bounding grain.
A language, worthy the GREAT MIND, that ſpeaks!
Preface, and *Comment*, to the *Sacred Page!*
Which oft refers its reader to the ſkies,
As pre-ſuppoſing his firſt leſſon *there*,
And Scripture ſelf a *Fragment*, *That* unread.
Stupendous book of wiſdom, to the wiſe!
Stupendous book! and open'd, NIGHT! by Thee.
By Thee *much* open'd, I confeſs, O *Night!*
Yet *more* I wiſh; but *how* ſhall I prevail?
Say, gentle *Night!* whoſe modeſt, maiden beams
Give us a *new* creation, and preſent
The world's great picture ſoften'd to the ſight;
Nay, kinder far, far more indulgent ſtill,
Say, thou, whoſe mild dominion's ſilver key
Unlocks our hemiſphere, and ſets to view
Worlds beyond number; worlds conceal'd by day
Behind the proud, and envious ſtar of noon!
Canſt thou not draw a deeper ſcene?—And ſhew
The Mighty POTENTATE, to whom belong
Theſe rich *Regalia* pompouſly diſplay'd
To kindle that high hope? Like him of *Uz*,

I gaze around; I ſearch on ev'ry ſide——
O for a glimpſe of HIM my ſoul adores!
As the chas'd hart, amid the deſart waſte,
Pants for the living ſtream; for HIM who made her,
So pants the thirſty ſoul, amid the blank
Of ſublunary joys. Say, goddeſs! Where?
Where, blazes *His* bright court? Where burns *His* throne?
Thou know'ſt; for Thou art near Him; by Thee, round
His grand pavilion, ſacred fame reports
The ſable curtain drawn. If not, can none
Of thy fair daughter-train, ſo ſwift of wing,
Who travel far, diſcover where *He* dwells?
A *Star* His dwelling pointed out *below*.
Ye *Pleiades! Arcturus! Mazaroth!*
And thou, *Orion!* of ſtill keener eye!
Say ye, who guide the wilder'd in the waves,
And bring them out of tempeſt into port!
On which hand muſt I bend my courſe to find *Him?*
Theſe courtiers keep the ſecret of their KING;
I wake whole nights, in vain, to ſteal it from them.
I wake; and, waking, climb *Night*'s radiant ſcale,
From ſphere to ſphere; the ſteps by nature ſet
For man's aſcent; at once to *tempt* and *aid*;
To *tempt* his eye, and *aid* his tow'ring thought;
Till it arrives at the *Great* GOAL of all.
In ardent *Contemplation*'s rapid car,
From *Earth*, as from my barrier, I ſet out.
How ſwift I mount! Diminiſh'd *Earth* recedes;
I paſs the *Moon*; and, from her farther ſide,
Pierce heav'n's blue curtain; ſtrike into *Remote*;

Where, with his lifted tube, the ſubtil ſage
His artificial, airy journey takes,
And to *Celeſtial* lengthens *Human* ſight.
I pauſe at ev'ry *Planet* on my road,
And aſk for HIM who gives their orbs to roll,
Their foreheads fair to ſhine. From SATURN's ring,
In which, of *Earths* an army might be loſt,
With the bold *Comet*, take my bolder flight,
Amid thoſe *ſov'reign* glories of the ſkies,
Of independant, native luſtre, proud;
The ſouls of ſyſtems! and the lords of life,
Thro' their wide empires!—What behold I *now?*
A wilderneſs of wonder burning round;
Where *larger* ſuns inhabit *higher* ſpheres;
Perhaps the *villas* of deſcending gods;
Nor halt I here; my toil is but begun;
'Tis but the threſhold of the DEITY;
Or, far beneath it, I am groveling ſtill.
Nor is it ſtrange; I built on a miſtake;
The grandeur of his works, whence *folly* ſought
For aid, to *reaſon* ſets his glory higher;
Who built thus high for worms (mere worms to *Him*)
O where, LORENZO! muſt the BUILDER dwell?
Pauſe, then; and, for a moment, here reſpire—
If human thought can keep its ſtation Here.
Where am I?--Where is *Earth?*--Nay, where art Thou,
O *Sun?*—Is the ſun turn'd recluſe?—And are
His boaſted expeditions ſhort to *Mine?*—
To *mine*, how ſhort! On Nature's *Alps* I ſtand,
And ſee a thouſand firmaments beneath!

A thou-

A thouſand ſyſtems! as a thouſand grains!
So *much* a ſtranger, and ſo *late* arriv'd,
How can man's curious ſpirit not enquire,
What are the natives of this world ſublime,
Of this ſo foreign, un-terreſtrial ſphere,
Where mortal, *untranſlated*, never ſtray'd?
" O ye, as diſtant from my little home,
" As ſwifteſt ſun-beams in an age can fly!
" Far from my native element I roam,
" In queſt of New, and Wonderful, to man.
" What province This, of *His* immenſe domain,
" Whom All obeys? Or mortals here, or gods?
" Ye bord'rers on the coaſts of bliſs! what are you?
" A colony from heav'n? Or, only rais'd,
" By frequent viſit from heav'n's neighbouring realms,
" To ſecondary gods, and half divine?—
" Whate'er your nature, *This* is paſt diſpute,
" Far other life you live, far other tongue
" You talk, far other thought, perhaps, you think,
" Than man. How various are the works of God!
" But ſay, *What* thought? Is *Reaſon* here inthron'd,
" And abſolute? Or *Senſe* in arms againſt her?
" Have you *Two* lights? Or need you no *reveal'd?*
" Enjoy your happy realms their golden age?
" And had your EDEN an abſtemious EVE?
" *Our* EVE's fair daughters prove their pedigree,
" And aſk their ADAMS—" *Who would not be wiſe?*"
" Or, if your mother *fell*, are you *redeem'd?*
" And if redeem'd—is your Redeemer *ſcorn'd?*
" Is This your final reſidence? If not,

" Change you your ſcene, *Tranſlated?* Or by *Death?*
" And if by *Death*; *What Death?*—Know you *Diſeaſe?*
" Or horrid *War?*—With war, this fatal hour,
" EUROPA groans (ſo call we a ſmall field,
" Where kings run mad). In *Our* world, DEATH deputes
" *Intemperance* to do the work of *Age*;
" And, hanging up the quiver *Nature* gave him,
" As ſlow of Execution, for diſpatch
" Sends forth *Imperial* butchers; bids them ſlay
" Their ſheep (the ſilly ſheep they fleec'd before),
" And toſs him twice ten thouſand at a meal.
" Sit all *your* executioners on thrones?
" With *you*, can rage for plunder make a *god?*
" And *bloodſhed* waſh out ev'ry other ſtain?—
" But You, perhaps, can't bleed: From matter groſs
" Your *Spirits* clean, are delicately clad
" In fine-ſpun Æther, privileg'd to ſoar,
" Unloaded, uninfected; How unlike
" The lot of man! How few of human race
" By their own *mud* unmurdered! How we wage
" Self-war eternal!—Is your painful day
" Of hardy conflict o'er? Or, are you ſtill
" Raw candidates at ſchool? And have you thoſe
" Who diſaffect *Reverſions*, as with *Us?*—
" But what are *We?* You never heard of *Man*;
" Or *Earth*, the *Bedlam* of the univerſe!
" Where *Reaſon* (un-diſeas'd with You) runs mad,
" And nurſes *Folly*'s children as *her own*;
" Fond of the fouleſt. In the ſacred mount
" Of *Holineſs*, where reaſon is pronounc'd
" *Infallible*;

" *Infallible*; and *thunders*, like a god;
" Ev'n *there*, by *Saints*, the *Dæmons* are outdone;
" What *Theſe* think wrong, our *Saints* refine to right;
" And kindly teach *dull* hell her own black arts;
" SATAN, inſtructed, o'er their *morals* ſmiles.—
" But *This*, how ſtrange to You, who know not *Man!*
" Has the leaſt rumour of our race arriv'd?
" Call'd *here* ELIJAH in his flaming car?
" Paſt by you the good ENOCH, on his road
" To thoſe fair fields, whence LUCIFER was hurl'd;
" Who bruſh'd, perhaps, your ſphere in his deſcent,
" Stain'd your pure cryſtal Æther, or let fall
" A ſhort eclipſe from his portentous ſhade?
" O! that the fiend had lodg'd on ſome broad orb
" Athwart his way; nor reach'd his preſent home,
" Then blacken'd *Earth* with footſteps foul'd in hell,
" Nor waſh'd in *Ocean*, as from ROME he paſt
" To BRITAIN's iſle; *too*, *too*, conſpicuous *There?*"
But this is all digreſſion: Where is HE,
That o'er heav'n's battlements the felon hurl'd
To groans, and chains, and darkneſs? Where is HE,
Who ſees creation's ſummit in a vale?
HE, Whom, while man is *Man*, he can't but ſeek;
And if he finds, commences *more* than man?
O for a teleſcope his throne to reach!
Tell me, ye learn'd on *Earth!* or bleſt *Above!*
Ye ſearching, ye *Newtonian* angels! tell,
Where, your Great MASTER's orb? His planets, where?
Thoſe *conſcious* Satellites, thoſe *Morning-ſtars*,
Firſt-born of DEITY! from central love,

By

By veneration moſt profound, thrown off;
By ſweet attraction, no leſs ſtrongly drawn;
Aw'd, and yet *raptur'd*; *raptur'd*, yet *ſerene*;
Paſt thought illuſtrious, but with borrow'd beams;
In ſtill approaching circles, ſtill *remote*,
Revolving round the ſun's eternal SIRE?
Or ſent, in lines direct, on embaſſies
To nations—in what latitude?—Beyond
Terreſtrial thought's horizon!—And on what
High errands ſent?—Here *human* effort ends;
And leaves me ſtill a ſtranger to *His* throne.
Full well it might! I quite miſtook my road.
Born in an age more Curious than Devout;
More fond to fix the *place* of heav'n, or hell,
Than ſtudious *this* to ſhun, or *that* ſecure.
'Tis not the *curious*, but the *pious* path,
That leads me to my point: LORENZO! know,
Without or *Star*, or *Angel*, for their guide,
Who worſhip GOD, ſhall *find* him. Humble *Love*,
And not proud *Reaſon*, keeps the door of heav'n;
Love finds admiſſion, where proud *Science* fails.
Man's ſcience is the culture of his heart;
And not to loſe his plumbet in the depths
Of *Nature*, or the more profound of GOD.
Either to know, is an attempt that ſets
The wiſeſt on a level with the fool.
To fathom *Nature* (ill-attempted *Here!*)
Paſt doubt is deep philoſophy *Above*;
Higher degrees in bliſs archangels take,
As deeper learn'd; the deepeſt, learning ſtill.

For,

For, what a *thunder* of omnipotence
(So might I dare to ſpeak) is *ſeen* in All!
In *Man!* in *Earth!* in more amazing *Skies!*
Teaching this leſſon, *Pride* is loth to learn——
"Not *deeply* to *diſcern*, not *much* to *know*,
"Mankind was born to WONDER, and ADORE."
And is there cauſe for higher *wonder* ſtill,
Than that which ſtruck us from our paſt ſurveys?
Yes; and for deeper *adoration* too.
From my late airy travel unconfin'd,
Have I learn'd nothing?—Yes, LORENZO! This;
Each of theſe ſtars is a religious houſe;
I ſaw their altars ſmoke, their incenſe riſe;
And heard *Hoſannas* ring thro' ev'ry ſphere,
A ſeminary fraught with future gods.
Nature all o'er is *conſecrated* ground,
Teeming with growths immortal, and divine.
The Great PROPRIETOR's all-bounteous hand
Leaves nothing waſte; but ſows theſe fiery fields
With ſeeds of *reaſon*, which to *virtues* riſe
Beneath *His* genial ray; and, if eſcap'd
The peſtilential blaſts of ſtubborn *will*,
When grown mature, are gather'd for the ſkies.
And is *Devotion* thought too much on *earth*,
When beings, ſo ſuperior, homage *boaſt*,
And *triumph* in proſtrations to THE THRONE?
But wherefore more of planets, or of ſtars?
Æthereal journeys, and, diſcover'd there,
Ten thouſand worlds, ten thouſand ways devout,
All *Nature* ſending incenſe to THE THRONE,

Except

Except the bold LORENZOS of Our ſphere?
Op'ning the ſolemn ſources of my ſoul,
Since I have pour'd, like feign'd ERIDANUS,
My flowing numbers o'er the flaming ſkies,
Nor ſee, of *fancy*, or of *fact*, what more
Invites the muſe.——Here turn we, and review
Our paſt nocturnal landſchape wide:—Then ſay,
Say, then, LORENZO! with what burſt of heart,
The whole, at once, revolving in his thought,
Muſt man exclaim, adoring, and aghaſt?
" O what a root! O what a branch, is here!
" O what a Father! What a Family!
" Worlds! ſyſtems! and creations!—And creations,
" In one agglomerated cluſter, hung,
" * Great VINE! On THEE, on THEE the cluſter hangs;
" The filial cluſter! infinitely ſpread
" In glowing globes, with various being fraught;
" And drinks (nectareous draught!) immortal life.
" Or, ſhall I ſay (for *who* can ſay enough?)
" A conſtellation of ten thouſand gems,
" (And, O! of what dimenſion! of what weight!)
" Set in one *Signet*, flames on the right hand
" Of MAJESTY DIVINE! The *blazing Seal*,
" That deeply ſtamps, on all created *mind*,
" Indelible, *His* ſovereign attributes,
" OMNIPOTENCE, and LOVE! *That*, paſſing bound:
" And *This*, ſurpaſſing That. Nor ſtop we *Here*,
" For want of *Pow'r* in GOD, but *Thought* in MAN.
" Ev'n *This* acknowledg'd, leaves us ſtill in debt:

* John xv. 1.

" If

" If *Greater* aught, That Greater all is THINE,
" DREAD SIRE!—Accept this *Miniature* of THEE;
" And pardon an *Attempt* from mortal thought,
" In which archangels might have fail'd, unblam'd."
How ſuch ideas of th' ALMIGHTY's *Pow'r*,
And ſuch ideas of th' ALMIGHTY's *Plan*,
(Ideas not abſurd) diſtend the thought
Of feeble mortals! Nor of *them* alone!
The fulneſs of the DEITY breaks forth
In *Inconceivables* to men, and gods.
Think, then, O think; nor ever drop the thought;
How *low* muſt *Man* deſcend, when *Gods* adore!
Have I not, then, accompliſh'd my proud boaſt?
Did I not tell thee, " * We would mount, LORENZO!
" And kindle our devotion at the *Stars*?"
And have I *fail'd*? And did I *flatter* thee?
And art all adamant? And doſt confute
All urg'd, with one irrefragable *Smile*?
LORENZO! *Mirth* how miſerable *here!*
Swear by the *Stars*, by HIM who made them, ſwear,
Thy heart, henceforth, ſhall be as pure as *They:*
Then *Thou*, like *Them*, ſhalt *ſhine*; like *Them*, ſhalt *riſe*
From low to lofty; from obſcure to bright;
By due gradation, *Nature*'s ſacred law.
The *Stars*, from whence?—Aſk *Chaos*—He can tell.
Theſe bright temptations to idolatry,
From *Darkneſs*, and *Confuſion*, took their birth;
Sons of *Deformity!* from fluid dregs
Tartarean, firſt they roſe to maſſes rude;

* Page 24.

And

And then, to ſpheres opaque; Then dimly ſhone;
Then brighten'd; Then blaz'd out in *perfect day*.
Nature delights in progreſs; in advance
From worſe to better: But, when *Minds* aſcend,
Progreſs, in part, depends upon *themſelves*.
Heav'n aids exertion; Greater makes the Great;
The *voluntary* Little leſſens more.
O be a *Man!* and thou ſhalt be a *God!*
And *Half Self-made!*—Ambition how divine!
O Thou, ambitious of diſgrace alone!
Still undevout? unkindled?—Tho' high-taught,
School'd by the ſkies, and pupil of the ſtars;
Rank coward to the faſhionable world!
Art thou *aſham'd* to bend thy knee to heaven?
Curſt fume of pride, exhal'd from deepeſt hell!
Pride in *Religion* is man's higheſt praiſe.
Bent on deſtruction! and in love with death!
Not all theſe luminaries, quench'd at once,
Were half ſo ſad, as one benighted mind,
Which gropes for happineſs, and meets *deſpair*.
How, like a widow in her weeds, the *Night*,
Amid her glimm'ring tapers, ſilent ſits!
How ſorrowful, how deſolate, ſhe weeps
Perpetual dews, and ſaddens nature's ſcene!
A ſcene more ſad *Sin* makes the darken'd ſoul,
All comfort kills, nor leaves one ſpark alive.
Tho' blind of heart, ſtill open is thine eye:
Why ſuch magnificence in all thou ſeeſt?
Of *Matter*'s grandeur, know, one end is This,
To tell the *Rational*, who gazes on it—

" Tho' *That* immenſely Great, ſtill Greater *He*,
" Whoſe breaſt, capacious, can embrace, and lodge,
" Unburden'd, nature's univerſal ſcheme;
" Can graſp *Creation* with a *ſingle* thought;
" *Creation* graſp; and not exclude its SIRE"—
To tell him farther—" It behoves him much
" To *guard* th' important, yet depending, fate
" Of being, brighter than a thouſand ſuns:
" One ſingle ray of *Thought* outſhines them all."—
And if man hears obedient, ſoon he'll ſoar
Superior heights, and on his purple wing,
His purple wing bedrop'd with eyes of gold,
Riſing, where *Thought* is now deny'd to riſe,
Look down triumphant on theſe dazzling ſpheres.
Why then perſiſt?—No mortal ever liv'd
But, *dying*, he pronounc'd (when words are true)
The whole that charms thee, abſolutely vain;
Vain, and far worſe!—Think Thou, with dying men;
O *condeſcend* to think as angels think!
O *tolerate* a chance for happineſs!
Our nature ſuch, ill choice enſures ill fate;
And hell had been, tho' there had been no God.
Doſt thou not know, my new aſtronomer!
Earth, turning from the *Sun*, brings night to man?
Man, turning from his *God*, brings *endleſs* night;
Where thou canſt read no *morals*, find no *friend*,
Amend no *manners*, and expect no *peace*.
How *deep* the darkneſs! and the groan, how *loud!*
And far, how far, from *lambent* are the flames!—
Such is LORENZO's purchaſe! Such his praiſe!

The

The proud, the politic, LORENZO's praiſe!
Tho' in his ear, and levell'd at his heart,
I've half read o'er the volume of the ſkies.
For think not thou haſt heard all this from *me*;
My ſong but echoes what Great *Nature* ſpeaks.
What has ſhe ſpoken? Thus the goddeſs ſpoke,
Thus ſpeaks for ever:—"Place, at nature's head,
"A ſov'reign, which o'er all things rolls his eye,
"Extends his wing, promulgates his commands,
"But, above all, diffuſes endleſs good;
"*To whom*, for ſure redreſs, the wrong'd may fly;
"The vile, for mercy; and the pain'd, for peace;
"*By whom*, the various tenants of theſe ſpheres,
"Diverſify'd in fortunes, place, and powers,
"Rais'd in enjoyment, as in worth they riſe,
"Arrive at length (if worthy ſuch approach)
"At that bleſt fountain-head, from which they ſtream;
"Where conflict paſt redoubles preſent joy;
"And preſent joy looks forward on increaſe;
"And That, on more; no period! ev'ry ſtep
"A double boon! a *Promiſe*, and a *Bliſs*."
How eaſy ſits *this* ſcheme on human hearts!
It ſuits their make; it ſooths their vaſt deſires;
Paſſion is pleas'd; and *Reaſon* aſks no more;
'Tis rational! 'tis Great!—But what is *Thine?*
It darkens! ſhocks! excruciates! and confounds!
Leaves us quite naked, both of help, and hope,
Sinking from bad to worſe; few years, the ſport
Of *Fortune*; then the morſel of *Deſpair*.
Say, then, LORENZO! (for thou know'ſt it well)

What's

What's *Vice?*—Mere want of compaſs in our thought.
Religion, what ?—The proof of *Common-ſenſe*.
How art thou whooted, where the *Leaſt* prevails!
Is it *my* fault, if *theſe Truths* call thee *Fool?*
And thou ſhalt never be *miſcall'd* by me.
Can neither *Shame*, nor *Terror*, ſtand thy Friend?
And art thou *ſtill* an inſect in the mire?
How, like thy guardian angel, have I flown;
Snatch'd thee from earth; eſcorted thee thro' all
Th' ethereal armies; walkt thee, like a God,
Thro' ſplendors of firſt magnitude, arrang'd
On either hand; clouds thrown beneath thy feet;
Cloſe-cruis'd on the bright paradiſe of GOD;
And almoſt introduc'd thee to THE THRONE!
And art thou ſtill carouſing, for delight,
Rank poiſon; firſt, fermenting to mere *froth*,
And then ſubſiding into final *gall?*
To beings of ſublime, *immortal* make,
How ſhocking is all joy, whoſe end is ſure!
Such joy, *more* ſhocking ſtill, the more it *charms!*
And doſt thou chuſe what ends ere well-begun;
And infamous, as ſhort? And doſt thou chuſe
(*Thou*, to whoſe palate *Glory* is ſo ſweet)
To wade into *perdition*, thro' *contempt*,
Not of poor bigots only, but thy *own?*
For I have peep'd into thy cover'd heart,
And ſeen it bluſh beneath a boaſtful brow;
For, by ſtrong guilt's moſt violent aſſault,
Conſcience is but *diſabled*, not *deſtroy'd*.
O thou moſt Aweful Being; and moſt Vain!

Thy

Thy will, how *frail!* how *glorious* is thy power!
Though dread ETERNITY has ſown her ſeeds
Of bliſs, and woe, in thy deſpotic breaſt;
Though heav'n, and hell, depend upon thy choice;
A butterfly comes croſs, and both are fled.
Is This the picture of a rational?
This horrid image, ſhall it be moſt juſt?
LORENZO! No: It cannot,—*ſhall* not, be,
If there is force in *Reaſon*; or, in *Sounds*
Chanted beneath the glimpſes of the moon,
A magic, at this planetary hour,
When *ſlumber* locks the gen'ral lip, and dreams
Through ſenſeleſs mazes hunt ſouls *un-inſpir'd.*
Attend—The ſacred myſteries begin——
My ſolemn *Night-born* adjuration hear;
Hear, and I'll raiſe thy ſpirit from the duſt;
While the *ſtars* gaze on this inchantment *new*;
Inchantment, not Infernal, but Divine!
" BY *Silence,* DEATH's peculiar attribute;
" BY *Darkneſs,* GUILT's inevitable doom;
" BY *Darkneſs,* and by *Silence,* ſiſters dread!
" That draw the curtain round NIGHT's ebon throne,
" And raiſe ideas, ſolemn as the ſcene!
" BY NIGHT, and all of aweful, Night preſents
" To *Thought,* or *Senſe* (of aweful much, to both,
" The goddeſs brings)! BY Theſe her trembling *Fires,*
" Like VESTA's, ever-burning; and, like *hers,*
" Sacred to thoughts immaculate, and pure!
" BY theſe bright orators, that *prove,* and *praiſe,*

" And preſs thee to revere, the DEITY;
" Perhaps, too, aid thee, when rever'd awhile,
" To reach *his* throne; as *ſtages* of the ſoul,
" Through which, at different periods, ſhe ſhall paſs,
" Refining gradual, for her final height,
" And purging off ſome droſs at ev'ry ſphere!
" By this dark pall thrown o'er the ſilent world!
" By the world's kings, and kingdoms, moſt renown'd,
" From ſhort ambition's *zenith* ſet for ever;
" Sad preſage to vain boaſters, now in bloom!
" By the long liſt of ſwift mortality,
" From ADAM downward to this ev'ning knell,
" Which midnight waves in *fancy*'s ſtartled eye;
" And ſhocks her with an hundred centuries, [thought!
" Round *death*'s black banner throng'd, in human
" By thouſands, *now*, reſigning their laſt breath,
" And calling thee—wert thou ſo wiſe to hear!
" By tombs o'er tombs ariſing; human earth
" Ejected, to make room for—human earth;
" The monarch's *terror!* and the ſexton's *trade!*
" By pompous obſequies that ſhun the day,
" The *torch* funereal, and the nodding *plume*,
" Which makes poor man's humiliation proud;
" Boaſt of our *ruin!* triumph of our *duſt!*
" By the damp vault that weeps o'er royal bones;
" And the pale lamp that ſhews the ghaſtly dead,
" *More* ghaſtly, through the thick incumbent gloom!
" By viſits (if there are) from darker ſcenes,
" The gliding ſpectre! and the groaning grave!

" By groans, and graves, and miſeries that groan
" For the grave's ſhelter! By deſponding men,
" Senſeleſs to pains of death, from pangs of guilt!
" By guilt's laſt audit! By yon *moon* in blood,
" The rocking firmament, the falling ſtars,
" And thunder's laſt diſcharge, great nature's knell!
" By SECOND *chaos*; and ETERNAL *night*"—
Be WISE—Nor let PHILANDER blame my *charm*;
But own not ill diſcharg'd my double debt,
Love to the living; *duty* to the dead.
For know I'm but executor; *he* left
This moral legacy; *I* make it o'er
By *his* command; PHILANDER hear in me;
And heav'n in both.——If deaf to theſe, Oh! hear
FLORELLO's tender voice; *his* weal depends
On *thy* reſolve; it trembles at thy choice;
For *his* ſake—love *thyſelf*: example ſtrikes
All human hearts; a *bad* example more;
More ſtill a Father's; that enſures his ruin.
As parent of his being, wouldſt thou prove
Th' unnatural parent of his miſeries,
And make him curſe the being which thou gav'ſt?
Is *this* the bleſſing of ſo fond a father?
If careleſs of LORENZO! ſpare, Oh! ſpare
FLORELLO's father, and PHILANDER's friend!
FLORELLO's father ruin'd, ruins Him;
And from PHILANDER's friend the world expects
A conduct, no diſhonour to the dead.
Let *paſſion* do, what *nobler motive* ſhould;

Let *love*, and *emulation*, riſe in aid
To *reaſon*; and perſuade thee to be—bleſt.
This ſeems not a requeſt to be deny'd;
Yet (ſuch th' infatuation of mankind!)
'Tis the moſt *hopeleſs*, man can make to man.
Shall I then riſe, in argument, and warmth?
And urge PHILANDER's poſthumous advice,
From topics yet unbroach'd?——
But Oh! I faint! My ſpirits fail!—Nor ſtrange!
So long on wing, and in no middle clime!
To which my great CREATOR's glory call'd:
And *calls*—but, now, in vain. *Sleep*'s dewy wand
Has ſtrok'd my drooping lips, and *promiſes*
My long arrear of reſt; the *downy god*
(Wont to return with our returning *peace*)
Will *pay*, ere long, and bleſs me with repoſe.
Haſte, haſte, ſweet ſtranger! from the peaſant's cot,
The ſhip-boy's hammock, or the ſoldier's ſtraw,
Whence *ſorrow* never chas'd thee; with thee bring,
Not hideous viſions, as of late; but draughts
Delicious of well-taſted, cordial, reſt;
Man's rich reſtorative; his balmy bath,
That ſupples, lubricates, and keeps in play
The various movements of this nice machine,
Which aſks ſuch frequent periods of repair.
When tir'd with vain rotations of the day,
Sleep winds us up for the ſucceeding dawn;
Freſh we ſpin on, till *ſickneſs* clogs our wheels,
Or *death* quite breaks the ſpring, and motion ends.
When will it end with me?

—"THOU only know'ſt,
"THOU, whoſe broad eye the *future*, and the *paſt*,
"Joins to the *preſent*; making one of *three*
"To moral thought! THOU know'ſt, and THOU alone,
"All-knowing!--All unknown!--And yet well-known!
"Near, tho' remote! and, tho' unfathom'd, felt!
"And, tho' inviſible, for ever ſeen!
"And ſeen in all! the *great* and the *minute*:
"Each globe above, with its gigantic race,
"Each flow'r, each leaf, with its ſmall people ſwarm'd,
"(Thoſe puny vouchers of OMNIPOTENCE!)
"To the firſt thought, that aſks, "*From whence?*" declare
"Their common ſource. THOU Fountain, running o'er
"In rivers of communicated joy!
"Who gav'ſt us ſpeech for far, far humbler themes!
"Say, by what name ſhall I preſume to call
"HIM I ſee burning in theſe countleſs ſuns,
"As *Moſes*, in the *buſh?* ILLUSTRIOUS MIND!
"The whole creation, leſs, far leſs, to Thee,
"Than *that* to the creation's ample round.
"How ſhall I name THEE?—How my labouring ſoul
"Heaves underneath the thought, too big for birth!
"Great Syſtem of perfections! Mighty Cauſe
"Of cauſes mighty! Cauſe uncaus'd! Sole Root
"Of *nature*, that luxuriant growth of GOD!
"Firſt Father of *effects!* that progeny
"Of endleſs ſeries; where the golden chain's
"Laſt link admits a period, who can tell?
"Father of all that is or heard, or hears!

" Father of all that is or ſeen, or ſees!
" Father of all that *is*, or *ſhall* ariſe!
" Father of this immeaſurable maſs
" Of *matter* multiform; or denſe, or rare;
" Opaque, or lucid; rapid, or at reſt;
" Minute, or paſſing bound! in each extreme
" Of like amaze, and myſtery, to man.
" Father of theſe bright millions of the *night!*
" Of which the leaſt full Godhead had proclaim'd,
" And thrown the gazer on his knee—Or, ſay,
" Is appellation higher ſtill, Thy choice?
" Father of *matter*'s temporary lords!
" Father of *ſpirits!* nobler offspring! ſparks
" Of high paternal glory; rich endow'd
" With various meaſures, and with various modes
" Of *inſtinct*, *reaſon*, *intuition*; beams
" More pale, or bright from *day divine*, to break
" The dark of matter *organiz'd* (the ware
" Of all *created* ſpirit); beams, that riſe
" Each over other in ſuperior light,
" Till the laſt ripens into luſtre ſtrong,
" Of next approach to GODHEAD. Father fond
" (Far fonder than e'er bore that name on earth)
" Of *intellectual* beings! beings bleſt
" With pow'rs to pleaſe THEE; not of paſſive ply
" To laws they know not; beings lodg'd in ſeats
" Of well-adapted joys, in different domes
" Of this imperial palace for thy ſons;
" Of this proud, populous, well-policy'd,
" Though boundleſs habitation, plann'd by THEE!

" Whoſe

" Whoſe ſeveral clans their ſeveral climates ſuit;
" And tranſpoſition, doubtleſs, would deſtroy.
" Or, Oh! indulge, immortal KING, indulge
" A title, leſs auguſt indeed, but more
" Endearing; ah! how ſweet in human ears!
" Sweet in our ears, and triumph in our hearts!
" *Father of immortality to man!*
" A theme that † lately ſet my ſoul on fire—
" And THOU the NEXT! yet equal! THOU, by whom
" *That* bleſſing was convey'd; far more! was *bought*;
" Ineffable the price! by whom all worlds
" Were made; and one, redeem'd! illuſtrious Light
" From Light illuſtrious! THOU, whoſe *regal* power,
" Finite in *time*, but infinite in *ſpace*,
" On more than adamantine baſis fix'd,
" O'er more, far more, than diadems, and thrones,
" Inviolably reigns; the *Dread* of gods!
" And Oh! the *Friend* of man! beneath whoſe foot,
" And by the mandate of whoſe aweful nod,
" All regions, revolutions, fortunes, fates,
" Of high, of low, of mind, and matter, roll
" Through the ſhort channels of expiring *time*,
" Or ſhoreleſs ocean of eternity,
" Calm, or tempeſtuous (as *thy* Spirit breathes),
" In abſolute ſubjection!—And, O THOU
" The glorious THIRD! Diſtinct, not ſeparate!
" Beaming from *Both!* with Both incorporate;
" And (ſtrange to tell!) incorporate with duſt!

† Nights the Sixth and Seventh.

" By condeſcenſion, as Thy glory, great,
" Enſhrin'd in man! Of human hearts, if pure,
" Divine inhabitant! The tie divine
" Of heav'n with diſtant earth! by whom, I truſt,
" (If not inſpir'd) uncenſur'd this addreſs
" To THEE, to THEM—To whom?—Myſterious Power!
" Reveal'd—yet unreveal'd! Darkneſs in light;
" Number in unity! our Joy! our Dread!
" The *Triple* Bolt that lays all wrong in ruin!
" That animates all right, the *Triple* Sun!
" Sun of the ſoul! her never-ſetting ſun!
" Triune, Unutterable, Unconceiv'd,
" Abſconding, yet Demonſtrable, GREAT GOD!
" Greater than Greateſt! Better than the Beſt!
" Kinder than kindeſt! with ſoft *pity*'s eye,
" Or (ſtronger ſtill to ſpeak it) with *Thine Own*,
" From Thy bright home, from that high Firmament,
" Where THOU, from all eternity, haſt dwelt;
" Beyond archangels unaſſiſted ken;
" From far above what mortals higheſt call;
" From elevation's pinnacle; look down,
" Through—What? Confounding interval! Thro' all
" And more than lab'ring *fancy* can conceive
" Through radiant ranks of eſſences unknown;
" Through hierarchies from hierarchies detach'd
" Round various banners of OMNIPOTENCE,
" With endleſs change of rapturous duties fir'd;
" Through wond'rous beings interpoſing ſwarms,
" All cluſtering at the call, to dwell in THEE;

" Through

" Through this wide waſte of worlds! this *viſta* vaſt,
" All ſanded o'er with ſuns; ſuns turn'd to *night*
" Before *thy* feebleſt beam—Look down—down—down,
" On a poor *breathing particle* in duſt,
" Or, lower, an *immortal* in his crimes.
" His crimes forgive! forgive his virtues, too!
" Thoſe ſmaller faults, half-converts to the right.
" Nor let me cloſe theſe eyes, which never more
" May ſee the ſun (though night's deſcending ſcale
" Now weighs up morn), unpity'd, and unbleſt!
" In *Thy* diſpleaſure dwells *eternal* pain;
" Pain, our averſion; pain, which ſtrikes me *now*;
" And, ſince all pain is terrible to man,
" Though tranſient, terrible; at *Thy* good hour,
" Gently, ah gently, lay me in my bed,
" My *clay-cold bed!* by nature, now, ſo near;
" By nature, near; ſtill nearer by diſeaſe!
" Till then, be *this*, an emblem of my grave:
" Let it out-preach the preacher; ev'ry night
" Let it out-cry the boy at PHILIP's ear;
" That tongue of death! that herald of the tomb!
" And when (the ſhelter of thy wing implor'd)
" My *ſenſes*, ſooth'd, ſhall ſink in ſoft repoſe,
" O ſink *this* truth ſtill deeper in my ſoul,
" Suggeſted by my pillow, ſign'd by *fate*,
" Firſt, in *fate*'s volume, at the page of *man*—
" *Man's ſickly ſoul, though turn'd and toſs'd for ever,*
" *From ſide to ſide, can reſt on nought but* THEE:
" *Here, in full truſt, hereafter, in full joy*;

" On THEE, the promis'd, ſure, eternal down
" Of ſpirits, toil'd in travel through this vale.
" Nor of *that* pillow ſhall *my* ſoul deſpond;
" For—Love almighty! Love almighty! (ſing,
" Exult, creation!) Love almighty, reigns!
" That death of *death!* that cordial of *deſpair!*
" And loud ETERNITY's triumphant ſong!
" Of whom, no more:—For, O Thou PATRON-GOD!
" Thou *God* and *Mortal!* Thence *more* GOD to man!
" Man's theme eternal! man's eternal theme!
" THOU can'ſt not 'ſcape *uninjur'd* from our *praiſe.*
" Uninjur'd from our praiſe can HE eſcape,
" Who, diſemboſom'd from the FATHER, bows
" The heav'n of heav'ns, to kiſs the diſtant earth!
" Breathes out in agonies a ſinleſs ſoul!
" Againſt the *Croſs*, *Death*'s iron ſceptre breaks!
" From famiſh'd *ruin* plucks her human prey!
" Throws wide the gates celeſtial to his *foes!*
" Their *gratitude*, for ſuch a boundleſs debt,
" Deputes their *ſuff'ring brothers* to receive!
" And, if deep human guilt in payment fails;
" As deeper guilt prohibits our *deſpair!*
" Injoins it, as our duty, to *rejoice!*
" And (to cloſe all) omnipotently kind,
" † *Takes his delights among the ſons of men.*" [heav'n?

What words are theſe—And did they come from
And were they ſpoke to man? to guilty man?
What are all myſteries to love like this?

† Prov. chap. viii.

The

The ſongs of angels, all the melodies
Of choral gods, are wafted in the ſound;
Heal and exhilarate the broken heart;
Though plung'd, before, in horrors dark as *night*:
Rich prelibation of *conſummate* joy!
Nor wait we diſſolution to be bleſt.
This final effort of the moral muſe,
How juſtly † *titled?* Nor for me alone:
For all that read; what ſpirit of ſupport,
What heights of CONSOLATION, crown my ſong!
Then, farewel NIGHT! Of darkneſs, now, no more:
Joy breaks; ſhines; triumphs; 'tis eternal day.
Shall that which riſes out of *nought* complain
Of a few evils, paid with endleſs joys?
My ſoul! henceforth, in ſweeteſt union join
The two ſupports of human happineſs,
Which ſome, erroneous, think can never meet;
True *taſte of life*, and conſtant *thought of death!*
The *thought* of death, ſole victor of its *dread!*
Hope, be thy *joy*; and *probity* thy *ſkill*;
Thy *patron* HE, whoſe diadem has dropp'd
Yon gems of heav'n; *Eternity*, thy *prize*:
And leave the racers of the *world* their own,
Their feather, and their froth, for endleſs toils:
They part with all for that *which is not bread*;
They mortify, they ſtarve, on wealth, fame, power;
And laugh to ſcorn the *fools* that aim at more.
How muſt a ſpirit, late eſcap'd from earth,

† The CONSOLATION.

Suppoſe PHILANDER's, LUCIA's, or NARCISSA's,
The *truth of things* new-blazing in its eye,
Look back, aſtoniſh'd, on the ways of men,
Whoſe lives whole drift is to forget their graves!
And when our *preſent privilege* is paſt,
To ſcourge us with due ſenſe of its *abuſe*,
The *ſame* aſtoniſhment will ſeize us all.
What *then* muſt pain us, would preſerve us *now*.
LORENZO! 'tis not yet too late; LORENZO!
Seize wiſdom, ere 'tis torment to be wiſe;
That is, ſeize *wiſdom*, ere ſhe ſeizes *thee*.
For what, my ſmall philoſopher! is *hell?*
'Tis nothing but full knowledge of *the truth*,
When *truth*, reſiſted long, is ſworn our foe;
And calls ETERNITY to do her right.
Thus, *darkneſs* aiding intellectual light,
And ſacred *ſilence* whiſp'ring truths divine,
And *truths divine* converting pain to peace,
My ſong the midnight raven has outwing'd,
And ſhot, ambitious of unbounded ſcenes,
Beyond the flaming limits of the world,
Her gloomy flight. But what avails the flight
Of *fancy*, when our *hearts* remain below?
Virtue abounds in flatterers, and foes;
'Tis pride, to praiſe her; penance, to perform.
To more than words, to more than worth of tongue,
LORENZO! riſe, at this auſpicious hour;
An hour, when heav'n's moſt intimate with man;
When, like a falling ſtar, the ray divine

Glides

Glides ſwift into the boſom of the *juſt*;
And juſt are all, *determin'd* to reclaim;
Which ſets that title high within thy reach.
Awake, then: thy PHILANDER calls: awake!
Thou, who ſhalt wake, when the creation ſleeps;
When, like a taper, all theſe ſuns expire;
When TIME, like him of *Gaza* in his wrath,
Plucking the pillars that ſupport the world,
In NATURE's ample ruins lies intomb'd;
And MIDNIGHT, *Univerſal* Midnight! reigns.

END of the NIGHT-THOUGHTS.

THE CENTAUR NOT FABULOUS.

IN

Six LETTERS to a FRIEND,

ON THE

LIFE in VOGUE.

Doth he not ſpeak Parables? Ezek.

TO THE

LADY * * * * * *.

MADAM,

YOUR Ladyſhip's character is ſo well known, that the public would blame me, if I preſented not theſe papers to You, who can ſo readily put them into the hands of thoſe who want them moſt.

You will, probably, aſk, why *The* CENTAUR is prefix'd as a title to them. The *men of pleaſure*, the licentious, and profligate, are the ſubject of theſe letters; and in ſuch, as in the fabled Centaur, *the brute runs away with the man:* Therefore I call them *Centaurs.* And farther, I call them Centaurs *not fabulous*, becauſe by their ſcarce half-human conduct, and character, that enigmatical, and purely ideal figure of the antients, is not unriddled only, but *realized*,

Your

Your ladyſhip's curioſity is great; and you, poſſibly, are willing to know what account antiquity gives of the family, or rather breed, of the *Centaurs*. It is as follows.

Of the Centaurs the moſt celebrated was CHIRON. He was a great botaniſt; and our bitter herb Centory takes its name from him. He thought all herbs bitter, becauſe, being very amorous, he could not find any amongſt them, that could abate the fever in his blood: and he left a complaint in the Greek language to that purpoſe; which Ovid, ſick of the ſame diſeaſe, has tranſlated, and tranſmitted to poſterity in his works.

But he was not only a botaniſt, but a great maſter of muſic: he compoſed an exquiſite piece of harmony for young Achilles his pupil, which charm'd Deidamia to his embraces; by whom he had Pyrrhus, in the court of her father Nicomedes, a little before he dropped his petticoats, and put on his boots for the Trojan war. But what will endear to your ladyſhip CHIRON's memory beyond any the moſt

moſt renowned in ſtory, is, that he was not only the venerable father of OPERAS, but was alſo the ſon of a MASQUERADE; the very firſt of thoſe numerous ſons, with which that prolific entertainment has ſince multiply'd mankind.

It happened thus: SATURN, falſe to his good wife OPS, had an intrigue with PHILLYRA. Seeing, one day, his injur'd ſpouſe coming to diſturb their intimacy, for eſcape, he turned himſelf into a HORSE; which occaſioned the noble equeſtrian figure of CHIRON, his ſon.

This, Madam, was the very firſt of MASQUERADES. You ſee the *virtuous* occaſion, and the *laudable* fruits of it. Jupiter's maſquerading in the form of a BULL, was long after. Europe takes its name from EUROPA, with whom he ran away in that ſhape. And your friend Clodius ſays, that probably, we celebrate HORNED MASQUERADES in memory of it. This is the recorded origin of that nocturnal aſſembly; and, indeed, it is evident to common ſenſe, that the maſquerade

had never exiſted, but for its *then* accidental, and *ſince* eſtabliſhed, ſubſerviency to love.

Theſe, you will ſay, are wild fables; but they are not without their morals. This fable of Saturn and Ops means, that, jealous CONSCIENCE, the Soul's lawful wife, will ever diſturb *licentious* pleaſure; and that there is no means of eſcaping the perſecution, but by becoming quite *brutal* in it. This, and the following explanations of the myſtical part of antiquity, have been overlooked by former commentators, though BACON was among them.

There is a ſecond moral in the preſent fable. CHIRON, Madam, was a *man*, as much, I mean, as the gayer part of your acquaintance. Why then is he repreſented as a *Centaur?* For two reaſons. He was, as I have ſaid before, the ſon of Saturn; and a very lewd old fellow. Repreſenting him as a Centaur, ſignifies, that beings of origin truly celeſtial, may debaſe their nature, forfeit their character, and ſink themſelves, by licentiouſneſs, into perfect beaſts.

Secondly,

Secondly, it ſignifies, that the reſt of the ſpecies, the ſober part of mankind, *prejudiced* by the abandoned manners of ſuch men, may naturally *imagine*, that they hear them neighing after their wives and daughters; galloping with more than human haſte after temptations; and, therefore, rather inſolently prancing on four legs, than decently content with two. This, probably, is the meaning; firſt, becauſe *prejudice* greatly hurts our diſcernment, and transforms objects exceedingly. Secondly, becauſe all allow that a Centaur is a mere creature of the *imagination.*

But though Chiron was the moſt celebrated, yet he was not the moſt antient, of our mythological cavalry. IXION was a primitive man of pleaſure; a gallant of Juno, and much in favour. Jupiter, leſs in his intereſt, interpos'd a cloud in her ſtead, which not long after was brought to bed of the firſt Centaurs. From that hour Juno commenced a ſcold; and in that character Virgil makes her ſwear, that if ſhe can't find friends in heaven, ſhe will ranſack hell for them.

The

The amour of IXION imports the great *height* of our expectation, and as great *depth* of our disappointment, in illicit love. And JUPITER's interposing the cloud, intimates, that *heaven* decrees this disappointment; and that therefore it is madness to flatter ourselves with hopes of the contrary. The fable would farther teach us, that our imagination, fired by passion, imposes not only on our understandings, but our very *senses*; which take clouds for goddesses; and adore darkness as divine.

You see, Madam, that gallantry is hereditary in this illustrious *house*, I should say STABLE: That therefore continence may be construed as an argument of bastardy. Who then can blame your gay friends for being loth to be bastardized, and disinherited; to lose honour, patrimony, and mistress, together?

They keep clear of this imputation: but there is one particular, that speaks not so much in their favour; but rather calls their legitimacy in question. How comes it to pass that the posterity of cloud-begotten Sires

should

ſhould be ſo cloudleſs a generation, that not one ſpot of Stupidity can be found about them?

But though *ſpotleſs* in this point, they are not ſo in another; which may ſet all right again. DEIANIRA, as a charm to regain the love of her huſband HERCULES, who was gone aſtray after OMPHALE, queen of Lydia, ſent him a ſhirt dipp'd in the blood of the Centaur NESSUS. But inſtead of anſwering her honeſt end, it gave him a diſtemper ſo virulent, that it prov'd mortal. To balance the diſadvantage above, ſome ſay, this diſtemper, at certain ſeaſons, ſtill runs in his *race*. Others rob our modern Centaurs of that credit; imputing their diſorder to another cauſe. And indeed, the preſent ſtory tells us, that ladies may convey ſomewhat elſe, when they mean only to make a preſent of their love.

But *worſe* than *diſtemper* is to be feared. You know, madam, Ixion's remarkable puniſhment; but probably, not the full import of it. Jupiter, for the father's ſake, deteſting his whole *poſterity*, deſign'd Ixion's *wheel*,

not only as an emblem of their endleſs *rotation* in unaltered circles of preſent pleaſures; but alſo, as a *prophecy* of their future *pains*; and an exact repreſentation of that rack, which, prudes ſay, they deſerve for their family-feats.

And now, madam, all things conſidered, have I named them wrong? I have named them, as moſt men of antient renown were, from their perſonal qualities and exploits. If you ſtill think me to blame, I flatter myſelf you will change your mind, when you have read the letters following.

This addreſs to your ladyſhip, will my ſober reader ſay, is itſelf a *Centaur* of the Pegaſean kind, in which the untamed imagination has too much run away with the judgment, and carried it to enormous heights. If your ladyſhip will venture, however, to be my fellow-traveller, I promiſe to carry you ſafely to an eminence in Fairy-land, from whence you ſhall ſurvey the moſt ſurpriſing and amuſing ſcene. To comply with your taſte, it ſhall even be a ludicrous one. Your favourite Centaurs ſhall be permitted to intrude even into

the

the moſt ſolemn groves of ſacred meditation. Their groteſque figures ſhall continually meet your eye, where you the leaſt expect, and where the ſevereſt critic, and the prude (all but Centaureſſes are prudes with you) will be moſt ſcandalized to find them.

As a pledge of this promiſe, accept of my frontiſpiece. It offers a ſketch which your ladyſhip, who know our Centaurs ſecret accompliſhments better than I do, may employ a better hand to perfect.

The ſtatues of the renown'd are ſet up in public, to kindle honeſt emulation. In moſt antient ſchools of wiſdom were the buſts, or portraits of the wiſe. What, madam, if, for your modern academy, *Hogarth* ſhould draw a Centaur, not, as uſual, with his bow and arrow, but (what will hit my mark as well) with Harlequin's ſabre by his ſide; in a party-colour'd jacket of pictur'd cards, a band of muſic before, a Scaramouch-demon behind him; a weathercock on his head, a rattle in his hand, the decalogue under his feet; and for the benefit of *your ſcholars*, a label out of his mouth, inſcrib'd, as was the temple of

Apollo, with Γνῶθι σεαυτὸν, in letters of gold [In ME, Know thyſelf]: *they*, your ſcholars, will take it in the true philoſophic ſenſe, and wonder how it came into the mouth of ſo ridiculous, and, to them, ſo foreign, a monſter.

As your ladyſhip's aſſembly, of *all* our hyppodromes is the moſt renown'd, I hope you will favourably accept the wholſome provender I ſend you. It is of an anti-circean nature; and may, poſſibly, turn your monſters into men.

But I detain you: it is SUNDAY NIGHT: and I hear a whole ſtring of your high-bred, unbridled, colts coming in full career; with a blaze in their foreheads, to outbrazen my rebukes: and a ſpring in their heels to bound high at your balls.

Quadrupedante putrem ſonitu quatit ungula campum.

This, madam, you underſtand better than they. But you begin to frown, as you always do at praiſe. Fear not; not one word of compliment ſhall you have from me during

our

our whole journey. I ſhall carry you at firſt a heavy trot through rough unbeaten ways, entertaining you unpolitely, with diſcourſe quite foreign to your way of thinking; ſuch as paſſed in correſpondence between me, and a friend, that would equally deſpiſe, and be deſpiſed, among ſuch as you think yours. In the progreſs of our travels (which I muſt honeſtly tell you, will only touch upon, not terminate in, Fairy-land) I ſhall carry you into an unknown country, where every thing is real, bright, and tranſporting. If there, compelled by the force of ſovereign truth, I ſhould not only aſſert, but convincingly prove, that you are of rank more than imperial, and preſent you with an *unflattering* glaſs, in which, notwithſtanding, your own form ſhall appear with all the charms of an angel ——But ſome breathing time is neceſſary to prepare for ſuch an arduous expedition. Therefore, I diſmount for the preſent, and ſay no more.

I am,

MADAM, *&c.*

LETTER I.

ON

INFIDELITY.

LETTER I.

ON

INFIDELITY.

DEAR SIR,

MAKE no apology for your requeſt; the *world* is your apology. The occaſion calls louder on me, than my *friend* can poſſibly do; and robs me of the credit of having my compliance owing intirely to your deſire. Alarm'd at our reigning paſſion for PLEASURE, you preſs me to write on that ſubject. Who can forbear? ſince, if the preſent canine appetite for it ſhould increaſe, where is that Bedlam which can receive a whole nation into proper methods of cure?

Your enjoining me one taſk has engaged me in two. Prevails not INFIDELITY as much as *Pleaſure?* And for ever they muſt prevail, or decreaſe, together. *Infidelity* is the parent of the love of Pleaſure in ſome: *Eve* doubted, and then eat: It is the conſequence of it in others; moſt of Eve's daughters firſt taſte, and then diſbelieve. Pleaſure, and Infidelity, reciprocally generate each other; and that, neceſſarily. For Faith is intirely the reſult of Reaſon; and reaſon is impotent in

proportion to the prevalence of ſenſe; therefore ſenſual Pleaſure begets Infidelity. On the reverſe, he that diſbelieves a futurity, muſt be fond of the preſent, and eagerly ſwallow its unrival'd delights; and therefore, Infidelity lets looſe the rein to Pleaſure, and gives it an ample range: He then, who would reduce one, muſt ſtrike at both. *Eve*, and the ſerpent, fell together; Pleaſure, like the firſt, plucks the forbidden fruit; and Infidelity ſays, with the latter, *Thou ſhalt not ſurely die.*

Theſe two, *now* national diſtempers, fairly divide us between them. One ſeizes the body; one, the mind: and where theſe two fiery darts have taken place, the deſtroyer may ſpare a third: his work is done. What then muſt be mine? The taſk is hard to extract them; for they ſeem, at preſent, to be not only poiſoned, but barbed, arrows, in the Britiſh heart.

However, I ſhall attempt, firſt, to make the *Infidel*, and then the *Voluptuary*, ſenſible of his error. I ſhall recommend Belief and Virtue, in the room of Doubt and Diſſoluteneſs; and by (I hope) properly adapted *Devotion*, aſſiſt their Repentance; that neceſſary ſtep of tranſition from one of theſe ſtates, to the other. And conſidering into whoſe hands theſe letters will *firſt* come (for I deſign them for the preſs) with regard to yourſelf, I ſhall give you your friend *Euſebius*'s character at large. And with regard to your ſiſter, I ſhall invite her, and her gay favourites, to a Funeral, inſtead of a Ball; and, then, I ſhall enter on ſubjects not unimportant, nor foreign to theſe.

As the mind is our ſuperior part, I ſhall firſt ſpeak of INFIDELITY, and then of PLEASURE. And it ſhall be

my

my endeavour ſo to ſpeak of both, as to render it the province of *wit*, rather than *wiſdom*, to reply. What may ſilence wiſdom will but provoke wit, whoſe ambition it is to ſay moſt where leaſt is to be ſaid. You may as well attempt to ſilence an echo by the ſtrength of voice, as a wit by the force of reaſon. They both are but the louder for it: they both will have the laſt word. How often hear we men with great ingenuity ſupporting folly? that is, by wit deſtroying wiſdom; as the ſame ſort of men by pleaſure deſtroy happineſs; prone to draw evil out of good, and ſet things at variance, which, by nature, are allies. Happineſs, and pleaſure, as wiſdom, and wit, are each other's friends, or foes; and if foes, of foes the worſt. Well-choſen pleaſure is a branch of happineſs; well-judging wit is a flower of wiſdom: but when theſe petty ſubalterns ſet up for themſelves, and counteract their principals, one makes a greater wretch; and the other a groſſer fool, than could exiſt without them: Pleaſure *then* calls for our compaſſion, and wit for our contempt. Of how many might the names have ſlept in ſafety, had not their unlucky parts awakened a juſt clamour againſt them?

Have we not a recent, and ſignal inſtance, how far wit can ſet wiſdom at defiance, and, with its artful brilliances, dazzle common underſtandings? That noble author || ſmiles at a certain text of which I ſhall make a ſerious uſe, *viz.* *When the ſons of God came in to the daughters of Men, they begot giants.* So when great talents fall in love with mean purpoſes, they beget errors of an enormous ſize, both in opinion, and in life.

|| Lord Bolingbroke.

What more enormous than to let Infidelity gather ſuch ſtrength, even in our decline, as to ſtand the terrors of a death-bed, and bequeath proud legacies of its poiſon to the world? Is not this ſtretching out our boldneſs even beyond the day of tryal? carrying the war into the very borders (if I may ſo ſpeak) of that *dread Being* we dare oppoſe? and, deſperately preſuming to atchieve that in our grave, of which a *Julian*, of equal genius, tho' not of equal guilt, deſpaired on a throne; and that the greateſt on earth? Julian was for defeating one prophecy; my lord is for expunging them all; and, with like ſucceſs, *Viciſti Galilæe*, may ſerve for both.

Take I too great a freedom? It is both folly and vice, to bear any man ill-will. But it is alſo folly and vice, not ſo to behave, when occaſion requires, as that our conduct may be *miſtaken* for ill-will, if the prejudiced think fit. Why ſhould our opponents call that *ill-will*, which they, if they were of our opinion, and thought us in a fatal error, and heartily wiſhed us well, would, neceſſarily, do out of perfect love? If the viſcount's admirers reſent out of zeal to his honour, I aſſure them, (though I have had no apparition) that his lordſhip, *now* on my ſide, thanks them not for the favour.

Time was, when thoſe errors, into which he fell, would have been more excuſable. For, that truth was obſcure, and falſehood ſpecious, and opinions endleſs; and that in theſe circumſtances the mind of man could find no reſt, becauſe ſuſpence is anxious, and aſſent almoſt inevitably betrayed into miſtake; *this* was the ſad and juſt complaint of the heathen world, which by God's

God's dereliction had loſt its way, and could not regain it, by the feeble glimmering of natural light.

But of what have *we* to complain, who grope, and wander, and ſtumble, at noon-day? Ours is not ignorance, but perverſeneſs; not want of a guide, but defection from him. Our noble author, ſo much admired, becauſe ſo much in the wrong, declares our light to be darkneſs; and with the boaſted acuteneſs of his ſuperior underſtanding, inſtead of couching thoſe that are blind, is for putting out the eyes of thoſe that ſee. Thus heaven's ſupreme bleſſing on us in the Goſpel, is not annulled only, by our perverſeneſs; but turned to much hurt. We are favour'd to our misfortune, we are enrich'd to our loſs.

The heathens courted truth as a miſtreſs, with warm, and ſincere addreſſes, but could not obtain her. We, having obtained her, treat her, as an abandoned age the lawful partners of their beds, with ſatiety, and diſguſt, and a wild deſire after new embraces. And what have we embraced? *Thus* runs at beſt the palatable doctrine of an age too knowing to need inſtruction; and too proud to bear it from heaven itſelf.

"Whatever notices of duty to God, or man, are im-
"printed in us by nature, or deduced by reaſon, theſe
"are obliging and neceſſary to be performed by all; as
"the natural religion: but as for any poſitive inſtitu-
"tions, or particular forms of religion, theſe are of
"human origin, ſtampt in the political mints of craft,
"intereſt, or ambition; a coin current for the vulgar
"only." It is fit, it ſeems, that the vulgar ſhould be ſettered, that their ſuperiors may expatiate more at large,

and

and not fear to meet with rivals in them. And, indeed, if the vulgar had the ſame principles, and opinions, with many of their maſters, their maſters would have as fair a chance to have their throats cut, as the murderer to be hanged for it.

As to God, they ſay, "The natural religion commands us to think worthily, and ſpeak reverently, of Him: but, as ſome have thought churches derogatory to the notions of an Omnipreſent Being; ſo formal prayers, and ſolemn ſervices, are no way neceſſary to a Being Omniſcient." They preſent Him (if with any) with a more ſublime and philoſophical devotion, ſtripped of all externals, inviſible as the Deity himſelf, and, indeed, as incomprehenſible to the multitude; whoſe religion, like themſelves, muſt have a *body*, as well as a *ſoul*; or it will evaporate into nothing. Thus, under pretence of a compliment to *one* divine attribute, they rob *all* of the worſhip due to them. They pretend to give God exalted homage, as the Jews arrayed our bleſſed Lord in a purple robe, to mock him, not adore. And here our undiſſembled neglect, if not contempt, of religion, and our barefaced venality ſetting all, even ſouls, to ſale, cannot but recal to mind, that theſe ſiſter iniquities, as if naturally connected, went hand-in-hand (as the hiſtorian tells us), towards the ruin of the *Roman* common-wealth.

Deos negligere, omnia venalia habere. Salluſt.

As to the duties of the ſecond table, they tell us, that "the precepts of nature run evidently againſt injuries, and injuſtice; we muſt by no means commit rapine, or murder; theſe are unſociable crimes: but as for any

"plea-

"pleaſurable enjoyments of ourſelves, why deprive our-
"ſelves of theſe? why ſtarve at a feaſt heav'n ſets before
"us? We cannot conceive God to be a tyrant; to what
"end has he given deſires, but that we ſhould ſatisfy
"them? or appetites, but that we ſhould indulge them?
"Anger and luſt, if conſtitutional, are venial ſins."

Thus the ſluices are ſet open for all ſenſuality, promiſcuous incontinence, and ſtudied arts of exceſs, to pour in uncontrouled: and by a ſecond compliment to the Deity, as ſincere as my lord's pretended regard for Chriſtianity, is varniſhed over a ſecond violation of his laws. Bacchus, and Venus, are recalled to a new apotheoſis under a chriſtian æra; and receive daily ſacrifice in the fortunes, health, and common dignity of man. What voluntary victims are we? And as victims of old were crown'd with flowers, how *gayly* does poor, devoted, *Britain* bleed at their altars?

In anſwer to their pleas, it muſt be obſerved, that deſires, and appetites, were not given us out of tyranny, but with an intention doubly kind; as a means both of pleaſure, and virtue, if gratified, and reſtrained, as religion directs. In both views they are bleſſings, but greateſt in the laſt; yet an *Eſau* will ever be for preferring the former.

Thus you ſee, Sir, that both the tables of the decalogue are broken, in a more terrible ſenſe, than they were by Moſes, at his deſcent from the mount; and from no diſſimilar cauſe. The ſufficiency of human reaſon is the golden calf which theſe men ſet up to be worſhipped; and in the frenzies of their extravagant devotion to it, they trample on venerable authority; ſtrike at an oak

with an oſier; the doctrine of God's own planting, and the growth of ages, with the ſuddain and fortuitous ſhoots of imagination; abortive births of an hour. Theſe human improvements on divine revelation may be compared to the prophaning the holy Bible with the figure of heathen idols, under *Antiochus Epiphanes*; or rather, to the proud *Roman* emperor, who took the head from Jupiter's ſtatue, and placed his own in its ſtead. Theſe are bold men; but the boldeſt, we hope, may be reclaimed. That Almighty finger which wrote the divine laws twice in ſtone, cannot want power to give them a new impreſſion in their apoſtate hearts.

And that they may the more willingly receive that impreſſion, I ſhall obſerve, that ſetting aſide the immoral conſequences of infidelity, *faith* is neceſſary on its own account, without relation to any thing elſe. Faith is not only a means of obeying, but a principal act of obedience. It is not only a needful foundation; it is not only as an altar, on which to ſacrifice; but it is a ſacrifice itſelf; and, perhaps, of all the greateſt. It is a ſubmiſſion of our underſtandings, an oblation of our idolized reaſon, to God; which he requires ſo indiſpenſably, that our whole will, and affections, tho' ſeemingly a larger ſacrifice, will not, without it, be received at our hands.

Does any queſtion this? His lordſhip's diſciples will be very apt to queſtion it; yet this is true; unleſs we can ſuppoſe the primitive martyrs to have laid down their lives for what was unneceſſary to their ſalvation. For it was not an atteſtation of their doctrine, but their faith, for which the bleſſed apoſtles were perſecuted, and the martyrs ſhed their blood; which they might eaſily

have avoided, if they had inſiſted only on the *moral* precepts of their new diſpenſation. Their moral precepts were approved, and welcomed, by the wiſeſt on earth. Nay, our infidels compliment them, eſpecially when they would give themſelves the greater weight in their oppoſition to our creed; yet, poſſibly, they had rather ſubſcribe that abſurd creed, than ſtand obliged to practiſe that morality, which they ſo much commend.

To renounce, or corrupt, the faith (one, or both of which is my lord's point) abſtracted from libertine gratifications to follow, or to get rid of fear from thoſe paſt; there ſeems to be ſo little temptation, that I ſhould think none would venture on it, but thro' ignorance of its guilt. Its guilt therefore I have pointed out; which ſhews that modern deiſm, how laudable ſoever the deiſt's life is, is criminal in itſelf. A virtuous life, riſing from a corrupted faith (if that could poſſibly be), is as an angel of light ſupported by a cloven foot; which many ſeem not to believe, otherwiſe they would not be ſo often pleading the virtue of deiſts, as a full abſolution of that ſect: whereas we are expreſly told, that the *juſt ſhall live by faith*; that is, even the juſt ſhall not live, that is, be ſaved, without it.

But tho' a corrupt faith is ſufficiently criminal in itſelf, yet its guilt rarely reſts there; it often produces an irregular life. On the contrary, vicious practice is ſure to produce a corrupt faith; or an abſolute renunciation of all belief: for the notices of good and ill are ſo fairly imprinted on our nature, and the practice of them is ſo ſtrongly guarded by conſequent hope and fear, that no conſcience is ſo hardened, as to ſin without

out the ſhelter of ſome pretence. The guilty huſh conſcience with ſuch ſoft whiſpers as theſe; Either, heaven takes not ſuch cognizance of our actions; or, is not ſo much concerned about them, as ſome imagine; or, its mercy will not ſuffer it to be juſt; or its juſtice will not ſuffer it to be ſo ſevere, as to puniſh temporal guilt with eternal pain: all which are corruptions of the faith. Or if theſe opiates will not do, they proceed to *renounce* the faith. They give themſelves a quite quieting draught of abſolute unbelief: a Deity is a dream, and Religion a cheat. And thus they throw off their fears, their God, and common ſenſe, together; and are deplorably gay, till they are irremediably undone. How happy might ſuch wretches be, if they knew what a trifle *pleaſure* is to *peace!* A very trifle is it, even when pleaſure is innocent: but when not, when pleaſure is an enemy to peace: then, then indeed, it is a trifle no more.

There is a text which muſt give ſome ſurprize to thoſe who doubt whether a bad life occaſions a *falſe* or *no* belief. It is ſaid, there *muſt* be hereſies, that is, falſe beliefs. And why? There is certainly no fatal neceſſity for them, from God's deſtination—No; but there is a *moral* neceſſity for them from man's corruption. A heart boiling with violent and vicious paſſions, will ſend up infatuating fumes to the head; and a delirious giddineſs of head will make a man fall into the groſſeſt miſtakes, be his natural abilities what they will. A lewd and obſtinate will fails not to blind the ſtrongeſt judgment, as *Delilah* the man of might.

Many, even of thoſe that hold faſt the faith, may, perhaps, not have obſerved, that faith is doubly pre-

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cious; it is our duty, and our refuge; nay, it is *doubly* our refuge. It reſcues our paſſions from flaming into vice; and it reſcues our underſtanding from darkening into errors. The ſame qualification which is neceſſary for us in order to pleaſe God, is as neceſſary to ſecure ourſelves from impoſture; and not only from ſuch impoſtures as *others* may prepare for us, but from our *own*. It is our ſole ſecurity againſt our framing impoſitions to deceive our own judgments (as ſhewn above), as well as againſt our incurring crimes to defeat our own ſalvation.

As to the myſterious articles of our faith, which infidels would by no means have me forget; "Who," ſay they, "can ſwallow them?" In truth, none but thoſe who think it no diſhonour to their underſtandings to credit their Creator. *Socinus*, like our infidels, was one of a narrow throat; and, out of generous compaſſion to the Scriptures (which the world, it ſeems, had miſunderſtood for 1500 years) was for weeding them of their myſteries! and rendering them, in the plenitude of his infallible reaſon, undiſguſting, and palatable to all the *rational* part of mankind. Why ſhould honeſt Jews and Turks be frighted from us by the Trinity? he was for making religion familiar and inoffenſive. And ſo he did; and unchriſtian too. Thoſe things which our hands can graſp, our underſtandings cannot comprehend. Why then deny to the Deity Himſelf the privilege of being one, amidſt that multitude of myſteries which He has made?

Here let me obſerve, what perhaps has eſcaped your notice, with regard to the bleſſed Trinity, which gives our unbelievers the greateſt offence. The *revelation* of

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it is not only neceſſary for our underſtanding the foundation of chriſtianity, but is alſo, I conceive, an abſolute demonſtration of its truth. Becauſe it is a myſtery which by *nature* could not poſſibly have entered into the imagination of man; which they, who moſt explode it, confeſs by their obſtinate rejection of it. For why do they reject it, but on that very account? Our opponents therefore, in ſome meaſure, ſupport us in our attachment to this ſupreme article of our creed, which they moſt condemn; and (what is ſomewhat remarkable in favour of our faith) ſupport us in it by the very cauſe for which it is condemned by them.

Myſteries, that is, thoſe great and hidden things of our religion, whoſe truth we are aſſured of by Divine Authority, but the manner of their being ſurpaſſes our underſtanding: ſuch as the plurality of perſons in the Divine Unity: God manifeſt in the fleſh: the operation of the Holy Spirit in the hearts of the believers: the ſpiritual preſence of Chriſt in the euchariſt: the uniting our ſcattered parts from the duſt of death. All which the Scriptures have expreſly delivered as catholic truths. Several of theſe, ſeveral heretics have rejected; and the *Socinians* have, in a manner, rejected them all. Faith in theſe is more acceptable to God, than faith in leſs abſtruſe articles of our religion; becauſe it pays that honour which is due to His teſtimony; and the more ſeemingly incredible the matter is which we believe, the more reſpect we ſhew to the relator of it. This (putting in a *caveat* againſt the ridicule of infidels) may be called *heroic* faith, correſpondent to heroic virtue, at which, out of prudence, they muſt ſmile.

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This heroic faith may be more *acceptable* to God (ſome may ſay); but, ſure, not more *uſeful* to man. It may have a good influence on *another* life; but what account does *this* find in it? Who can ſhew me the *moral* effects of it?—From faith in theſe myſteries, man neceſſarily, and more juſtly, adores the incomprehenſible majeſty of God; and more juſtly and perfectly contemplates his own littleneſs, and diſproportion of thought to thoſe truths that are vouchſafed to his faith. Hence he heartily renders God a due honour for his teſtimony; and a due acknowlegement of his profeſſed care of his church; and a due thankfulneſs for the mercy of his revelation. He renders a due obedience to his proper government, as a chriſtian, that is, the authority of the church; and a due aſſiſtance to the public peace, which is never ſafely built but on unity of judgment. And as to his *private* virtue, he keeps in due ſubjection the pride of underſtanding, that moſt vicious affection of the mind, which if let looſe, would be attended with a multitude of evils; and with one in particular, which occaſions this letter. But though we could ſee none of theſe temporal advantages, yet would it be moſt reaſonable in us to believe; unleſs we, who think it right to believe implicitly in thoſe on whom our fortune depends, think it wrong to believe implicitly in Him, on whom depends our ſalvation.

But there is, I confeſs, ſome error, on our own part, with regard to myſteries. We, perhaps, have given ſome ſmall excuſe for our infidels contempt of myſteries, by more pious, than prudent, attempts, that have been ſometimes made toward an explanation of them. A

myſtery

myſtery explained is a myſtery deſtroyed: for what is a myſtery, but a thing not known? But things not known may reaſonably be believed; in the very ſtrangeſt things there may be truth, and in things very credible, a lie *.

It is with our underſtandings as with our eyes. Both have their myſteries: both have objects beyond their reach; ſome accidentally, ſome abſolutely. We ſee not thoſe objects that are placed in an obſcure light, becauſe there is a defect in the medium: we ſee not thoſe that are veſted with too much light, becauſe there is a weakneſs in the ſenſory, unable to ſuſtain ſuch ſtrong impreſſions. Thus it is with the objects of our underſtandings: ſome things we know not, for want of being duly informed. Salvation was a myſtery to the Gentiles; but ceaſed ſo to be, when revealed by the goſpel. Other things we know not, becauſe they exceed the meaſure of our comprehenſion. Thus, ſome articles of our faith are ſuch myſteries, as by no revelation can ceaſe to be ſo. They muſt be myſteries, while men are men; while yet unbleſſed with powers that are not indulged to this imperfect ſtate. As it is bold and vain, ſo, perhaps, it has even been prejudicial to the truth, to labour at rational evictions of ſacred myſteries; for, by theſe means, men attempt to comprehend the Divine Nature, by putting it under ſome injurious diſguiſe; as we venture to gaze at the ſun, after we have watched it into a cloud.

God forbad images of Himſelf, becauſe it is impoſſible that any ſenſible repreſentations could do otherwiſe than derogate from Him that is inviſible: nor can the diminiſhing imagery of our notions derogate leſs from Him

* Quintil. Inſtitut. l. iv. c. 2.

that

that is incomprehenſible. I preſume not to cenſure thoſe who have made uſe of illuſtrations to the proper ends of piety; all I mean, is, that fallible ratiocination ſhould not be made the grounds of faith, whoſe proper baſis is infallible teſtimony. Nor is it longer faith than while it reſts on *that*; for when I believe, not ſo much what is revealed, as what my own reaſon pronounces to be true; I believe not God, but myſelf. I aſſume, not obey; and give proof rather of the pride, than humiliation, of my reaſon; whereas its humiliation is a principal end aimed at by God's ſo ſtrict demand of our faith.

And, indeed, far from humiliation, and even common modeſty, muſt he be, who hopes to give light to thoſe myſteries which St. Paul, with all his learning, eloquence, and inſpiration, pronounced to be to the Jews a ſtumbling block; and to the Greeks, thoſe moſt ſubtle of men, fooliſhneſs: that is, they thought it folly to believe them, becauſe unintelligible; and becauſe they did not apprehend, that there was any Divine authority to compel their belief. And ſuch Greeks have *we*; Epicurean Greeks, ſenſual, ſubtle, and unbelieving; and whoſe celebrated writings are of equal authority with

Quicquid Grecia mendax
Audet in hiſtoria. Juv.

Men, who reject divine aſſiſtance, as too officious, with a ſort of diſdain, as if it affronted their own abilities; and whoſe preſumptuous opinions are induſtriouſly ſpread, by peſt-men, through the land.

With the groſs and horrid effects of ſuch opinions, and their conſequences, the diſtempered age groans, and

and kingdoms ſhake, and judgments threaten. And well they may. How many private families have their infamous ſecrets? how many public tranſactions their barefaced iniquity? high courts of juſtice have their *ius datum ſceleri*, and bluſh not to plead precedent for the violation of their own laws; and the corruption of the times, for more corruption ſtill. Is not this heaping mountain upon mountain againſt heaven? And think we heaven will never return the blow?

We have had already, nay *now* have, *ſome* light and merciful admonitions from heaven. But can it be thought, that an age of judgments and paſtimes; of riots and diſtreſſes; of exceſſive debts, and exceſſive expence; of public poverty, and private accumulation; of new ſects in religion, and new ſallies in ſin; and every other contradiction to common ſenſe, does not call for *more?* I, Sir, am faſtened in the country; nor know I much of that larger and fouler ſink of debauchery in which you breathe. But even here, I know too much. Where is that village that has not its ſuicides of intemperance; or its bold adventurers for ſtill quicker death from the hand of public juſtice? And, to confirm that opinion above advanced, of the cloſe tie and mutual growth of vice and unbelief, almoſt every cottage can afford us one that has *corrupted*, and every palace one that has *renounced*, the faith.

I know, Sir, you will tell me, that it is the buſineſs of our common piety, to deplore; of our prayers, to obſtruct; and of our lives, rather than our harangues, to confute them. True; for if our Chriſtianity is to be found no where but in our books, the Chriſtian and Infidel,

fidel, may drop their diſpute. A Tillotſon, and a Bolingbroke, are on the ſame ſide: their conteſt is but verbal; their agreement is eſſential, and their aſſociation will prove eternal.

But, Sir, it is our duty to ſpeak and write (if we can), as well as live, againſt the enemies of our Chriſtian faith. I proceed therefore to obſerve, that the Viſcount's arguments againſt the authority of the Scriptures have been long ſince anſwered. But he is not without precedent in this point. This repetition of already refuted arguments ſeems to be a deiſtical privilege, or diſtemper, from which few of them are free. Even echoes of echoes are to be found amongſt them; which evidently ſhews, that they write not to diſcover truth, but to ſpread infection; which old poiſon re-adminiſtred will do, as well as new; and it will be ſtruck deeper into the conſtitution, by repeating the ſame doſe. Beſides, new writers will have new readers. The book may fall into hands untainted before; or, the already-infected may ſwallow it more greedily in a new vehicle; or, they that were diſguſted with it in one vehicle, may reliſh it in another. I therefore aſk pardon: what I miſ-called diſtemper, I find, on ſecond thoughts, is perfect prudence; but ſuch prudence as, with them, would throw a chriſtian writer into the bottom of contempt.

There are more reaſons for our deiſts to be diſſatisfy'd with themſelves than thoſe already given. *Infidel* is an opprobrious name; but time was, when *deiſm* was the true religion; and they are for ſtill retaining the credit once due to that character. It is therefore

fit for a friend to Chriſtianity, nor leſs fit for a friend to them, to take notice, that it is impoſſible for a *good* man, that is, one aiming at the divine favour above all things, to reject an offered revelation, without inquiring into its title to the high character it aſſumes; and, that it is as impoſſible (in my opinion) for a *reaſonable* man to reject the Chriſtian *revelation*, if he *does* inquire. He, therefore, who continues a deiſt, in a land enlightened by the Goſpel, muſt be wanting in goodneſs, or reaſon; muſt be either criminal, or dull. None, therefore, can be more miſtaken than they, that profeſs deiſm for the credit of ſuperior underſtanding, or for the ſake of exerciſing a more pure, and perfect, virtue. Yet theſe are the only pretences which they do, or dare, avow, for their fatal choice. Muſt not then their *real* motive be of a nature which they think prudent to conceal?

But to conceal it, is not eaſy: for *reaſon*, our of itſelf defective reaſon, in many points of the laſt moment to man, wants, wiſhes, calls for a *revelation*; and cannot but accept, when offer'd, what it calls for: that is, reaſonable deiſts cannot but become Chriſtians, where the Goſpel ſhines.

Or argue thus (for it admits of various proof): God Almighty would not have made a revelation, but in order to be received. And by whom received? Doubtleſs by the reaſonable, and good. And if by ſome of them, why not by all? And if all the reaſonable, and good, receive it; what muſt they be that reject it? Therefore revealed religion rejected, proves natural religion diſobeyed. I ſaid, above, that deiſts were

blameable, how good ſoever their lives might be: But *now* it ſeems to appear, that their lives cannot be good. Others, perhaps, have forborne ſpeaking ſo plain, out of charity. I venture on it out of what I conceive to be charity, greater ſtill: for nothing that can awaken them can be kindly ſuppreſſed.

Cornelius, the centurion, though one of the beſt of men, thought not the belief of the Goſpel unneceſſary to his ſalvation. But modern deiſts, wiſer, not better than he, have their objections to the Goſpel. Their chief objection is againſt its *myſteries*. There is nothing myſterious in it, but with regard to things, which we either *can not*, or *need not*, underſtand. *Can* not, through the limitation of the human intellect; or *need* not, through the ſufficiency of other means, and motives, for our leading good lives. To what amounts, then, this capital objection, and charge againſt it? To no more than this, *viz.* That Chriſtianity performs not what is impoſſible to be performed; for it is as impoſſible for its Author, Almighty God, to do *more* than is needful for his gracious end, *viz.* the good lives of mankind; as to do what, in its nature, is impoſſible to be done.

Indeed, all their objections to Chriſtianity ſeem to be no more, nor leſs, than playing the beſt card they have; than uſing the beſt expedient they can think of, to keep themſelves in countenance, and the world in the dark, as to the true motive of their apoſtacy. Nor are their objections to be looked on, in thoſe that are men of ſenſe, as an argument of their diſbelief, but their diſlike. They wiſh not the myſteries removed;

for that would rob them of a favourite objection. They wiſh not the darkneſs of the myſteries removed; but transferred; transferred from the *doctrines*, to the *moral precepts*. Theſe are without a cloud; theſe are too plain for their purpoſe. None ever fully complied with theſe, but was eaſily reconciled to the myſteries of the Goſpel. The diſguſted, deſpotic heart commands the paſſive, obedient head, to fight its unjuſt quarrel, and ſay it is its own: So that *Satan* may blame them for ſome degree of hypocriſy in his favour; may blame them for only pretending to diſbelieve. If, on the other hand, Chriſtians were not alſo hypocrites; hypocrites, I mean, as to practice; they would rob the deiſts of their moſt plauſible plea againſt us; and either leſſen their numbers, or increaſe their ſhame.

I hope that ſome of the deiſts; at leaſt, ſome of thoſe whoſe principles are endangered by them; may admit ſome little impreſſion from what has been offered. I hope they may diſcern, and own the *ſelf-accuſation* which is, evidently, implied in our deiſts renunciation of Chriſtianity; or, if I am miſtaken, that they will ſet me right; for if I have wrong'd them, I have wrong'd them much. For, in what a diſadvantageous light appear theſe deſerters from chriſtianity in theſe pages? A *deiſtical* tongue, a *chriſtian* conſcience, and a partly *pagan* heart! What a ſad compoſition is this? It is a far heavier charge than I wiſh to find true.

But it is a natural queſtion, "How comes it to paſs, "that men of parts ſhould ſo much diſaffect the Scrip- "tures, ſo admirable, and ſtill more and more admi-

"rable, in proportion to the diſcernment of their "reader?"

Can it be from *ignorance?* It may be ſo, if their hearts are worſe than their heads; for there are parts of Scripture which none but a good man can well underſtand: "Rejoice always; and again I ſay, Rejoice." This muſt appear to the vicious abſurd, becauſe impracticable, and therefore un-inſpired. To rejoice in tribulation, they have neither cauſe, nor power. Thus, bad manners, almoſt neceſſarily, render men infidels to holy writ. On the contrary, a good life is a key to the Scriptures. "The ſecret of the Lord is with thoſe "that fear him." A text this, as unintelligible to the vicious as the former. As he has had no experience, ſo neither has he any comprehenſion of its truth. The good man comprehends, and *feels* it too. Thus the Scripture, like the cloudy pillar which it records, is light to the true *Iſraelite*, but darkneſs to the *Egyptians*. Hence acuteſt underſtandings in religious debates often loſe their edge.

Can that cauſe we ſeek, be *vanity?* It may be ſaid of the Viſcount's writings as of *Cataline*, *Satis eloquentiæ, ſapientiæ parum*. Had his eloquence been leſs; had thoſe talents been denied him, which flattered him with hope of ſhining a firſt luſtre in the lettered world, he had eſcaped a temptation which has evidently been too hard for his prudence; and a common-ſiz'd head had, probably, left his heart in ſafety. So formidable a poſſeſſion is an immortal pen (if his *is* immortal); a pen more fatal to its maſter, than *Cato*'s ſword.

Or might not *envy* be the cauſe we ſeek? "But can "theſe men envy Chriſtians, whom they quit on account "of our unhappy miſtake?" Man is not only deſirous, but ambitious too, of happineſs. He but ill bears that another ſhould be happier than himſelf; becauſe ſuperior happineſs is a natural argument of ſuperior wiſdom or worth. The man of a libertine life knows that the good Chriſtian, if his religion is true, is, on the whole, much happier than himſelf. Therefore he wiſhes it to be falſe; and endeavours to find it ſo. And ſtrong endeavours to be in the wrong, Heaven will puniſh with ſucceſs. It will permit them to believe their own lye: that is, to fall on their own ſword, which was drawn againſt the truth.

Non hos quæſitum munus in uſus. Virg.

And I am the more inclined to impute their oppoſition to *envy*, rather than *vanity*; becauſe pure vanity is conſiſtent with good-nature; and may be a very candid thing: But envy has bitterneſs, and ill-will; and ridicule is the genuine child of ill-nature; ridicule, that offenſive brat of which they are ſo fond.

Now though nothing is more improper in important debates than raillery; yet can I make ſome apology for them. They may, poſſibly, perceive, that the load on their own miſgiving conſciences, would ſink them, were it not for the light expedient of forced mirth, like a bladder filled with wind, to keep them above water: and that they, ſometimes, have their doubts, and miſgivings of heart, it is reaſonable to believe.

To

To give full eſtabliſhed ſecurity is the incommunicable privilege of the Goſpel.

For the reaſons above, I venture to ſet down *envy* among the cauſes of infidelity, though (I think) by others overlooked. And further, I believe it to be a *very principal* cauſe of *lettered* infidelity in the world. Other, but not greater vices are, doubtleſs, the chief cauſe of infidelity in lower, and illiterate, life; where ſenſe has no rival in thought, but tyrannizes alone.

But whatever is the cauſe of their infidelity, be it *ignorance*, *vanity*, *envy*, or any other vice, their infidelity will naturally have ſome effect in *our* favour. It is much to be hoped, that it will put us on our guard, and make us better men. Our leading a bad life, is playing into their hands. It is giving them an argument in the debate, againſt ourſelves. Though the argument is bad, yet it is an argument ſtill. And ſince they have none *but* bad arguments, and ſuch they *will* make uſe of, we ſhould not increaſe the number. This is like furniſhing them with ammunition to protract the war: and though the war protracted will not hurt us, yet will it hurt them; and, as we are Chriſtians, *that* ſhould give us an equal concern.

Secondly, Chriſtianity may thank its *opponents* for much new light, from time to time, thrown in on the ſublime excellence of its nature, and the manifeſtation of its truth; opponents, in *ſome* ſort, more welcome than its *friends*; as they do it ſignal ſervice without

running it in debt; and have no demand on our gratitude for the favours they confer. The ſtronger its adverſaries, the greater its triumph: the more it is diſputed, the more indiſputably will it ſhine. With what pious pleaſure muſt you ſee the brighteſt talents ſtriking at it, with the moſt hearty good-will, yet dropping harmleſs, like old Priam's ſpear?

Telum imbeile ſine ictu
Conjecit; rauco quod protinus ære repulſum,
Et ſummo clypei nequicquam umbone pependit. Virg.

Chriſtianity, that great ſupport of man's welfare, and God's glory, like a well-built arch, the greater load of oppoſition, and reproach, its enemy lays on it, the ſtronger it ſtands.

Thirdly, Their antichriſtian writings may *detect* them: for ſince (as ſhewn above) a falſe faith, or no faith at all, is the natural conſequence of a bad life, it is poſſible that the gentlemen in the oppoſition, while they are giving us their opinions, may be giving us *more*: They may be diſcovering their *morals*, while they mean only to teach us their *creed*: And, thus, they may carry, like *Bellerophon*, their own condemnation, while they imagine they are, graciouſly, conveying intelligence, and new light, to mankind: So that the old proverb, *Bellerophontis literæ*, may be a proper motto for the learned labours of them all.

But condemnation from others will be much more ſupportable than their own; if that ſhould fall on them. And where is he on whom it ſhall not one day fall?

If

If a man born blind, who had never ſo much as heard of the ſun, moon, and ſtars, ſhould ſuddenly receive ſight; he would not be more aſtoniſhed at the firſt ruſhing in of thoſe *material* glories, than would the man, by vice ſtruck blind to religion, be, at his firſt conviction of heavenly truths, *viz.* divine manifeſtations, awful revelations, fulfilled prophecies, numberleſs miracles; and one unbroken chain of marvellous expedients, from before creation to this hour, for our ſalvation; thoſe ſpiritual luminaries; thoſe (dare I ſay) ſun, moon, and ſtars, of the *moral* world; if God ſhould give him light. Till then, walking in darkneſs, he muſt miſtake danger for ſafety, ſhame for glory, and miſchief for pleaſure. Like the blinded of *Sodom*, he reaches eagerly after, and preſſes hard for, enjoyment; but of real enjoyment, of true felicity, he cannot find the door; as I propoſe ſhewing in my *next*.

If ſome part of it may ſeem too ſevere, I muſt obſerve, that no man can ſtrike fire with a feather. A fire elemental is diffuſed through all nature, though lock'd up in dark matter, and unapparent in moſt parts of our globe. Thus, I conceive, that there is divine grace ſpread through all hearts (where not intirely quenched by vice), though inactive, and dormant in them. No ſlight animadverſion can awake it. It muſt be a blow of ſome force, that ſtrikes it out of a heart of flint. And ſuch there *muſt* be in theſe days of darkneſs, when few ſparks of grace are apparent. Such there *muſt* be when infidelity prevails; for infidelity, and faith, are the day and night of the moral world. One reveals, the other

hides heaven from our thoughts. Happy am I if this Letter ſhall occaſion the ſmalleſt dawn on but one ſingle heart, in this our grand eclipſe. With you, dear Sir, the dawn is long ſince paſt; and that you may continue in the light, till heaven, at that knock of *faith* which only will be heard, ſhall admit you into perfect day, where *undiſputed* truth, and *unmiſtaken* pleaſure, with endleſs glory, crown the juſt; this is the prayer of

Your Affectionate

Humble Servant.

LETTER

LETTER II.

ON

PLEASURE.

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PLEASURE.

DEAR SIR,

I Now proceed to say something of *Pleasure*; that subject which you so warmly recommend; not aware, I believe, that it may be long before men, whose faults set the public eye at defiance, will learn to blush when alone in their closets. And till then, what hope of much reformation from the pen? Besides, though our transgressions with regard to pleasure are great; yet they are not new. To the scandal of the antediluvians be it spoken, there were British iniquities before the flood. To such a degree have all moral subjects been exhausted, that it is difficult for a writer on them not to *repeat*, though he is no plagiary. But your desires are an apology for my deficiencies in compliance with them.

Whether we are more hardened in infidelity, or softened in pleasure, may be disputed; but none can deny that

that the love of pleaſure is the root of every crime. Theft, murder, perjury, are a few of its fatal fruits; nor the worſt. But I ſhall not dip ſo deep in its conſequences; yet deep enough to render the name of a *man of pleaſure*, which ſome affect for their honour, not only ridiculous, but deteſtable.

What an extravagant dominion does *pleaſure* exerciſe over us? It is not only the peſtilence that walketh in darkneſs; but an arrow that deſtroyeth at noon-day. The moon hides her face at our midnight enormities; and the morning bluſhes on our unfiniſhed debauch. I am almoſt tempted to ſay, that our impudent folly puts nature out of countenance. But there is no need by words to exaggerate the fatal truth. Our luxury is beyond example, and beyond bounds; it ſtops not at the poor: even they that live on alms are infected with it.

It has often been obſerved, that it is with ſtates, as with men. They have their birth, growth, health, diſtemper, decay, and death. Men ſometimes drop ſuddenly by an apoplexy; ſtates by conqueſt; in full vigour, both. As man owes his mortality to original ſin; ſome ſtates owe their fall to ſome defect, or infelicity, in their original conſtitution. But contracted diſtemper is the moſt common ruin of ſtates, and men. And what national diſtemper more mortal than our own? On the ſoft beds of luxury moſt kingdoms have expired.

If cauſes ſhould not fail of their uſual effect; if our national diſtemper, far from being cutaneous at preſent, ſhould reach the vitals of our ſtate; how applicable to this

this opulent, proud, profligate metropolis (which calls the ſea her own, and whoſe vices, more diffuſive, are without a ſhore) would be the prophet's ſacred dirge over antient Tyre; whoſe ſea-born wealth, and hell-born iniquity, let it not be ſaid, was but a prelude to our own? And yet if we proceed in our infernal career, that moſt infamous reproach may become but too true.

The ſublime, and moſt memorable words run thus; and I cannot but think that, at preſent, they muſt have a formidable ſound in a Britiſh ear. "Is this the joyous "city? whoſe antiquity is of days remote? whoſe mer- "chants were princes, and her traffickers the honour- "able of the earth? whoſe revenue was the harveſt of "rivers? and her exchange the mart of nations? who "ſat as a queen; ſtretched out her hand over the ſeas; "and ſhook the kingdoms? But ſhe is fallen! ſhe is "fallen! Heaven has ſtained the pride of all glory. "How ſorely muſt you be pained at the report?"

Has not Britain reaſon to be more deeply ſtruck with this part of Scripture than the reſt of mankind? The prophecy as yet, indeed, through mercy, is unfulfilled in us: but if Britain continues, like Tyre,—"To ſing "as an harlot; to take the harp; to make ſweet melo- "dy; ſing many ſongs; turn to her hire; and commit "fornication with all the kingdoms of the world,"—her fall is to be feared, unleſs the fate of moſt former empires betray us into miſtake; and that national poiſon which has ever proved mortal, is mortal no more. If the fate of kingdoms is lodged in a juſt, and impartial hand, what but the groſſeſt ſelf-flattery can baniſh our fears? And if our fears are baniſhed, leave it not unob-

unobſerved, that our very want of fear is a proof of our danger: for Heaven infatuates, when it determines to deſtroy.

"But ſuch a general face of affluence, and gaiety. "Are theſe ſigns of ruin?" Not ſigns only, but cauſes of it too. Not Babylon alone has been ſmitten at a banquet, and periſhed in its joys. Moſt nations have been gayeſt, when neareſt to their end; and, like a taper in the ſocket, have blazed as they expired.

Were our fathers to riſe from their graves, they would conceive that their fortune had thrown them on ſome day of public feſtivity, nor imagine that every day was drunk of the ſame diſeaſe. By our gaiety we ſeem to celebrate the perpetual triumph of the millennium; by our vices, to add to it the manners of the antediluvian world; and, by our ſecurity under them, to put full confidence in the divine promiſe that the world ſhall be drowned no more. If with the vices of the antediluvians, we had their years too, more might be ſaid in our excuſe: but to weigh ſuch a moment againſt eternity, ſhews that the ballance is in very weak hands. The world, which the divine vengeance ſwept away for its enormities, was incapable of ſo great a guilt.

But in ſo general a diſſolution of manners, are there none that ſtand intitled to more particular blame? Are not our great patrons of luxury a ſort of anti-Curtii, who leap into the gulph for the ruin of their country? Their country's ruin they threaten by the malignity of their example; while by the profuſion of their expence they nearly finiſh their own. What a weakneſs is ſelf-denial? what idle ſelf-tormentors are penitents? what wretched

lunatics,

lunatics, or groſs ſuicides, are the noble army of martyrs, if *theſe* men are in the right? How *cheap* would their pleaſures come, if they coſt them nothing more than their health, credit, and eſtates?

Pleaſure is in ſome ſort more pernicious than direct vice. Vice has, naturally, ſome horror in it. It ſtartles, and alarms the conſcience, and puts us on our guard. Pleaſure, under the colour of being harmleſs, has an opiate in it; it ſtupefies and beſots. In the ſoft lap of pleaſure conſcience falls aſleep. Vice, loſing its horror, becomes familiar. And as vice increaſes, ſome expedient becomes neceſſary to reconcile us to ourſelves. Thus, looking out for ſome ſhadow of excuſe, we naturally ſlide into groundleſs doubts, and become infidels out of pure ſelf-defence.

And, as pleaſure makes us infidels, by ſtupefying the conſcience; ſo it makes us very bad huſbands of temporal enjoyments, by darkening our underſtandings; and this unqualifies us for the very point to which *alone* we pretend.

It is this cloud on their underſtanding which hinders our voluptuaries from diſcerning, that their blind rage for pleaſure turns bleſſings into their reverſe. Birth, education, and abundance, are great bleſſings; but, abuſed by pleaſure into motives and inſtruments of indulgence, birth is more ignoble than obſcurity; knowlege is more pernicious than ignorance; and abundance more a misfortune than want. Men of rank (and of ſuch I ſpeak) if wrong, can ſcarce avoid ſinning beyond themſelves. How peſtilential their example falls on the lower world, which, under the welcome force of ſuch illuſtrious

illuſtrious authority, turn diſſolute, as much for the ſake of their credit and fortune, as of their luſts; pride, and intereſt, bringing needleſs ſuccour to looſe deſire; and Tyburn has ſometimes reaped, what aſſemblies have ſown. Great men in the wrong, are powerful engines of miſchief, and, like burſting bombs, deſtroy themſelves, and all around them.

And as to the two ſupreme bleſſings, and glories of man, their reaſon and immortality; theſe, as they manage it, flame out into vengeance too great to be mentioned without horror. Their reaſon ſerves only to render them more guilty; and their immortality to render endleſs the ſad wages of their guilt.

It is this cloud on our underſtanding which makes us ſo little maſters in the very ſcience we profeſs. Happineſs is our ſtudy, but are we not dunces in it? We know not, or ſeem not to know, that all *real* enjoyment lies within the compaſs of God's commands; which abridge not, but defend them: that when we dip too deep in pleaſure, we ſtir a ſediment, that renders it impure, and noxious: that (as much a paradox as it may ſeem) the beſt means of arriving at the true pleaſures of the body, is to preſerve, and cultivate, the powers of the ſoul; and that a good underſtanding is, in man, the ſource, and ſecurity, of mere *animal* delight.

Let theſe gentlemen take notice that I am not againſt enjoyment; I am as great a lover of it, as they; for without a reliſh of the good things of life, we cannot be thankful. Enjoy, but enjoy reaſonably, and thankfully to the great Donor; *that* will ſecure us from exceſs. To *enjoy*, is our wiſdom, and our *duty*; it is the great leſſon

of

of human life; but a leſſon which few have learned; and none leſs than *theſe*, who proclaim themſelves *maſters of art* in it.

It is this pleaſure-bred cloud on the underſtanding, which makes us forget, that virtue is the health of the ſoul: that all proviſion, and parade from without, can make a ſenſualiſt juſt as happy, as the ſame can make an invalid: that both have pains adhering, neceſſarily, to their preſent ſtate: that both have rather remedies, than joys: that aſſemblies, balls, maſquerades, *&c.* are but as well-ſtored hoſpitals, unneceſſary to the ſound; and but poor palliatives to the ſick: though pretenders to more than health, they confeſs our diſtemper; and, what is worſe, increaſe the diſtemper they confeſs: and that of diſtempers the worſt, a wrong judgment in our moſt important point.

I grant, that in the boundleſs field of licentiouſneſs, ſome baſtard joys may riſe, that look gay, more eſpecially at a diſtance; but they ſoon wither. No joys are always ſweet, and flouriſh long, but ſuch as have ſelf-approbation for their root, and the divine favour for their ſhelter. We are for rootleſs joys, joys beyond appetite; which is the ſole root of ſenſual delight. We are for joys, not of man's native growth, but forced up by luxurious art: dung'd by great expence; and ſhone on, not by the divine favour, but a ſtrong imagination, which gives them all their little taſte; and makes them apt, like other crude fruits, to ſurfeit, and deſtroy. We are, in a word, for joys of our own creation, the ſeeds of which Heaven never ſowed in our hearts. But we may as well invade another prerogative of Heaven, and,

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with the tyrant of *Elis*, pretend to make thunder and lightning, as *real* joy. I ſay *real* joy; joy we may make, but not chearfulneſs. Joy may ſubſiſt without thought; chearfulneſs riſes from it. Joy is from the pulſe; chearfulneſs from the heart. That may give a momentary flaſh of pleaſure; this alone makes a happy man. And happy men there may be, who never laughed in their lives: and in a ſituation, where reaſon calls for the reverſe, there is not in nature ſo melancholy a thing as joy.

It is this intellectual cloud, which hangs, like a fog, over every gay reſort of our *moral* invalids (though inviſible to common eyes), which flings us not only into miſtakes, but contradictions. How ſick are we of yeſterday? yet how fond of to-morrow, though devoted to the ſame cheat as the paſt? Which ſtings us into contradictions not only in reaſon; but contradictions to ſenſe. We can't believe that fatigue, is fatigue; let its cauſe be what it will. Too much recreation tires as much, as too much buſineſs; yet one we ſwallow; are choaked by the other. The man of buſineſs has, at leaſt, his ſeventh day's reſt. Our fever for folly never intermits. Our week has no ſabbath in it. So much harder is the maſter whom we ſerve, than that of better men; and yet, to our infamous honour be it ſpoken, we are better ſervants than they. How do we run, labour, expend; expoſe ourſelves, hurt our families, reſiſt unbounded, eternal temptations to wiſdom; offer up the rich ſacrifice of conſcience, and underſtanding; watch; watch late; and all, but pray, for his ſervice? Quite jaded with protracted amuſements, we yawn over them. The dull drone of nominal diverſion ſtill humming

ming on, when the ſhort tune of enjoyment is over, lulls us quite aſleep. Like the bear in the fable, we hug our darling to death. Inſtead of rejoicing in tribulation (of which few among us ever heard), we ſorrow in delight: for, to ſpeak the truth (though we would not have it divulged), we tread this eternal round of vanities, leſs, for the pleaſure it brings, than for the pain it ſuſpends. It is a refuge, not a prize. Like criminals (as we are), we fly to it from our much-injured, unforgiving foes, from ourſelves; which chide and ſting us, when alone; when together, we ſupport each other's ſpirits; which is like ſailors clinging to each other for ſafety, when the veſſel is ſinking. We fly from ourſelves, becauſe we firſt fly from our Maker. Wretched flight! Hell is nothing but an intire abſence from him; and every partial departure has its proportion of it.

But thoſe deep draughts of pleaſure which beſot us, muſt anſwer for all abſurdities; and, among the reſt, for our intire ignorance of the nature of that world in which we live. Mirth at a funeral is ſcarce more indecent and unnatural, than a perpetual flight of gaiety, and burſt of exultation, in a world like this: a world which may ſeem a paradiſe to fools, but is an hoſpital with the wiſe: a world, in which bare eſcape is a prime felicity. *Effugere eſt triumphus.*

The numberleſs pains of body, and mind; the dark ſolemn approaches to, or diſmal veſtibules of, the grave, as well as opening graves themſelves, are ſo thick ſcattered over the face of the whole earth, that an unpetrified heart can't look round, without feeling an inevitable damp, and general diſconſolation; and venting a ſigh

univerſal for the whole family of *Adam*, for the lot of all mankind. Nothing but ſtrong faith in eternal life could hinder tears from burſting o'er it: nor are tears too much; for ſympathy is the chief duty of human life.

Were one tenth part of the wretchedneſs *ſeen*, that is *felt*, it would ſtrike us with horror. Heaven means to make one half of the ſpecies a moral lecture to the other. It ſurrounds us with deplorable objects, not more for the ſake of the wretched, than for our own; that our compaſſion awaken'd, may awaken our prudence; and teach us what we have *to do*, by ſhewing us what we have *to fear*. Shall the rich, and the well educated, throw their abundance down the ſink of unprofitable and untaſted delights, while untaught multitudes miſtake, and ſin; and indigent multitudes ſhiver, and ſtarve? While we think we are ſparing expences, we are running in debt. How deep are we in arrears to the diſtreſſed? The diſtreſſed have, from reaſon, as juſt a demand on our ſuperfluities, as we have, from law, on our ſtewards for our eſtates. But this is no *play-debt*, and therefore, without diſhonour, undiſcharged.

Is then my repeated cenſure of intellectual darkneſs too ſevere? I wiſh it were. But, alas! how diſtant from their thoughts are the points the moſt important? How foreign to their intereſt, all that is neareſt their hearts? When I ſpeak of their darkneſs, I do not forget my own. There is not that man on earth that does not well deſerve cenſure, and even from them. But there is difference in deviation from the right. *Mulattos* are not *Ethiopians*. I grant in their excuſe, that, though

though all can see folly in pleasures past, yet must he be wiser than *Solomon*, who sees it in those to come. Yet wiser than *Solomon*, in this respect, *must* we be, or continue mere idiots; and idiots with regard to the *present* life: for this life's enjoyment lies, chiefly, in our title to the joys of the next; as earth becomes fruitful from the kind influence of the distant sun.

And now what occasion of advancing any thing more to the condemnation of these sons of *Epicurus*, and in disfavour of pleasure, than this, *viz.* That by darkening our understandings, it robs us of *this* world; and by stupefying our consciences, of the *next*. So far are they from their boasted happiness, that even in the judgment of a Heathen (not to mention the Scripture, of much less authority with them), they are dead while yet alive. *Is demum* VIVERE, *atque animâ frui videtur; qui alicui intentus negotio, aut artis bonæ, aut præclari facinoris, famam quærit.* Sallust.

It is said of their master Epicurus, *Deos verbis reliquit, re sustulit.* By his, and their, goddess, *Pleasure*, they do just the same. They loudly boast, and effectually destroy, it; the first, through want of modesty; the last through want of understanding. But they must keep themselves in countenance, though out of heart; and make themselves some *small* amends from vanity, for what is wanting to reason, and to sense.

Nor tread they their Master's steps in this alone. He out of a swarm of dancing atoms, was for making a world: They, out of a giddy whirl of innumerable amusements, those minute particles of pleasure, are for forming

forming happineſs: A ſyſtem equally philoſophical; and of equal ſucceſs. A GOD alone can make one; the god-like only can atchieve the other: And where are they to be found in this hopeful ſchool?

The *one thing neceſſary* for happineſs is in common to both worlds; this, and the next. In vain we ſeek a different receipt for it, one in time, another in eternity. *Virtue* wanting, every thing elſe becomes neceſſary to happineſs, and ineffectual. To what amounts, then, the boaſt of their numberleſs felicities? It brings, in proof of their happineſs, a demonſtration of their miſery. *A good man ſhall be ſatisfied from himſelf* alone. A bad man ſhall be diſſatisfied, with all the world at his devotion.

But there is a third particular, in which, if they had followed their Maſter, it would have been more for their advantage, and credit: An indulgent Providence has abundantly provided us with irreproveable pleaſures; why are theſe ſwept away with an ungrateful hand, to make room for poiſons, of our own deadly compoſition, to be placed in their ſtead? *Epicurus* was in love with his gardens. But that is an amour too innocent for *them:* A garden has ever had the praiſe, and affection, of the wiſe. What is requiſite to make a wiſe, and happy man, but reflection, and peace? and both are the natural growth of a garden. Nor is a garden only a promoter of a good man's happineſs, but a picture of it; and, in ſome ſort, ſhews him to himſelf. Its culture, order, fruitfulneſs, and ſecluſion from the world, compared to the weeds, wildneſs, and expoſure of a common field, is no bad emblem of a good man, compared to

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the multitude. A garden weeds the mind; it weeds it of worldly thoughts; and ſows celeſtial ſeed in their ſtead. For what ſee we there, but what awakens in us our gratitude to heaven? A garden to the virtuous is a paradiſe ſtill extant; a paradiſe unloſt. What a rich preſent from heaven of ſweet incenſe to man was waſted in that breeze? What a delightful entertainment of ſight glows on yonder bed, as if in kindly ſhowers the watry bow had ſhed all its moſt celeſtial colours on it? Here are no objects that fire the paſſions: None that do not inſtruct the underſtanding, and better the heart, while they delight the ſenſe; but not the ſenſe of *theſe* men. To them the tulip has no colours; the roſe no ſcent: Their palate for Pleaſure is ſo deadened, and burnt out, by the violent ſtroke of higher taſtes, as leaves no ſenſibility for the ſofter impreſſions of theſe; much leſs for the reliſh of thoſe philoſophic, or moral, ſentiments, which the verdant walk, clear ſtream, embowering ſhade, pendant fruit, or riſing flower, thoſe ſpeechleſs, not powerleſs, orators, ever praiſing their great Author, inſpire: Much leſs ſtill for their religious inſpirations. Who cannot look on a flower till he frightens himſelf out of infidelity? Religion is the natural growth of the works of God; and infidelity, of the inventions of men.

Spiritually blind, deaf, and ſtupid, they ſee not the great *Omnipreſent* walking in the garden; they hear not his call; they know not that they are naked; they hide not among the trees; but ſtand in open defiance of his laws. *Religion* is far from them.

And where can we hope religion, if not in *age?* And are there *Hecubas* to be found among the bright *Helens* of our times? Is diverſion grown a leveller, like death? Can aſſemblies baniſh diſtinction, and ſhew us all dates, like church-yards? The latter, for *their* years, is the more proper ſcene. Give me leave, Sir, to addreſs them; and addreſs them in haſte: They may die by to-morrow. To-night they are ſhining at the aſſembly. Thither, for a moment, imagination tranſports me to attend them.

"So various, Ladies! and cogent, are the reaſons "which might call you to this place, that I am at a "loſs which to thank for the honour it receives. Come "you to admire, or to be admired? Your modeſty de- "clines the laſt. Come you out of kindneſs, then, "to authoriſe thoſe amuſements, you chuſe not to "adorn? Or come you, out of compaſſion, to make "theſe young criminals appear more innocent, than "they could appear uncompared with ſuperior indiſ- "cretion? Or come you out of piety, to return thanks "at this *religious houſe*, for your ſo narrowly eſcaping "the grave? Or come you, out of pure generoſity, to "heighten the mirth of the night? Your point is car- "ried. What borrowed ornaments are theſe? Is vani- "ty ſtill in its ſpring? Is the folly of hairleſs heads "putting forth its gay bloſſoms in the December of "life? Age cannot drop its dignity, and yet retain its "privileges. It muſt be laughed at, if it will not be "revered; and objects of reverence cannot enter at "*theſe* doors. We reverence age, as we reverence "noble birth; on ſuppoſition, both: If our ſuppoſi- "tion proves falſe, our homage dies.

"A lit-

"A little entertainment, you ſay, is natural—What "a portentous jumble of ſeaſons, what a violation of "nature is this; winter dancing with the ſpring? "Where are the firſt partakers of your paſtimes, when "paſtimes became you? Their very monuments are "in ruins. What real connexion of heart, or inter- "eſts, can you have with any now alive? And without "ſuch connection, how inſipid your commerce with "them? Sure you cannot approve *Mezentius*'s connec- "tion of the living with the dead.

"Hang your hours, though, probably, ſo few, ſo "*very* heavy on your hands, that you had rather bear "contempt, than them? Is it drowned by the ſpright- "ly viol, or hear you yon ſolemn bell? Wants that the "power to call you to your cloſets, which calls your "grand-children to their graves? Is it thus you diſ- "charge the duties of age to the riſing generation? "Whatever ſeeds of prudence you would ſow in their "hearts, before they can take root, theſe vanities blow "away; eſpecially, if you, like the ladies of Lapland, "heighten the * *hurricane* yourſelves.

"Have you never heard, my good Ladies, of the re- "demption of time? You carry yours to market, and "ſell it for nothing, nay, you dearly buy it off your "hands. Can nothing but ſuch trifles, ſuch murder "of time, make you think that you are alive? Can "nothing but the ſtroke of death convince you, you "ſhall die? To their beauty alone, too much amuſe- "ment is forgiven, even in the young. What, then,

* Some aſſemblies ſo called.

" have *you* to plead?—That which is fairer than beauty,
" if you will call it to your aid: Virtue can reconcile
" our reſpect to wrinkles. It can render age amiable,
" when bloom ſmiles in vain. But vice, and defor-
" mity, when twiſted together, is ſuch a *Gorgon*, as
" turns the tendereſt heart into ſtone.

" Pardon, Ladies! that I preſume to call that vice,
" which you will ſoften by ſome milder name. What is
" innocence in youth, may be vice in years. Beſides,
" mark the miſchief of what you call harmleſs expedi-
" ents to ſmooth the rugged path of life. You ſpread
" that path with ſnares, to the ruin of thoſe you love.
" You make *parental authority*, that natural ſafeguard
" of youth, their temptation to folly; and *filial obedi-*
" *ence*, ſo lovely, ſo pious, the ſtrange cauſe of their
" crimes. Through ſuch mazes of more than folly,
" when parents lead the way; children, out of pure
" duty, may tread their wrong ſteps. Or, if they have
" more diſcernment, or more grace; what follows!—
" What you yourſelves will be ſhocked to hear; and
" I to tell: A daughter *bluſhing* for her who bore her.
" Which to my knowledge, and aſtoniſhment, has been
" the too memorable, and too deplorable, caſe."

Here I would fain leave off, and throw a mantle over the nakedneſs of our own ſex: But that would be too great partiality. It is too ſure *Adam* alſo fell. As I have ſpoken to his daughters, I muſt ſpeak, Sir, by your permiſſion, now to his *aged* ſons. I can ſpeak with more freedom to theſe! I was forced to ſpare his daughters, out of decency.

" Ye

"Ye first on roll for Eternity! why this waste of "time? Why is its date quite erased? Your spruce ap- "pearance is a perfect forgery. And deserves it not "the wonted penalty for it? You, for whom it is al- "most as unnatural, as for a mole, to be seen above- "ground, what mean you by trespassing on this nether "world? Or if here, ye deserters from death! to whose "corps you belong, why list into so very foreign a ser- "vice? Death, the more he is forgot, the more formi- "dable he grows. But how could you forget him, "who have seen him snatching from your bosom such "numbers of your friends? Has he so often knocked "at the next door, and so frequently shook his lance "in vain? Will you drop into the grave on your road "to the ball? You, who, *one* full age of man expired, "commence, a *new*, with all the wantonness of youth, "by an antichristian regeneration; a *second* birth into "all the foibles of a sensual life! Consider, what ten- "der reverence, what respect mixt with compassion, "is paid to years owning their infirmities, and sup- "porting them, as they ought. But infirmities of "body dissembled, that those of the mind may be the "more indulged; a vicious mind stinging on a jaded "body into shame; this calls not only for the scorn, "but detestation, of mankind.

"Consider, Sirs! is there not some mistake? Do "not your minds, through disorder of the machine, go "too slow, and misrepresent the time of day? Else, "how could men, who have not space sufficient left "between them, and their graves, for life's wonted "delusions to display their gay phantoms; who can

" hardly hope to repeat to-morrow the farce of to-day;
" ſtill perſiſt to be boys? Young men, indeed, may
" ſee viſions of what never ſhall come to paſs; and be
" raviſhed with them: But old men in their ſenſes,
" cannot ſo much as dream dreams of delight; ſuch
" delight, I mean, as yours. What delight can theſe
" gay ſcenes afford you? I ſhould think you ſhould be
" more mortified, than amuſed, where you ſcarce can
" ſee a face that does not make you look twenty years
" older than before. Hope you any regard, or affec-
" tion among them? No; deſpair even of toleration,
" but when theſe *moderns*, for amuſement, dip into you,
" as into chronological tables, to know what happened
" before the flood: Find friends in coevals, or de-
" ſpair.

" Indeed, my good friends, in *one* ſenſe, moſt cer-
" tainly, you are ſtrangers upon earth, why will you
" not be ſo in the *beſt?* That you *might* be ſo in the
" beſt is, probably, the ſole reaſon you are ſtill alive.
" Men in years, and the clergy, are the two natural
" ſupports of virtue and religion; that is, the two co-
" lumns on which public welfare is built: And the
" firſt is the ſtronger, as there is leſs prejudice againſt
" it. They both have higher obligations to be wiſe
" than other men: And if the world ſees thoſe higher
" obligations fail of their due effect, their conſciences
" will ſit eaſier under the neglect of their own. The
" clergy are voluntiers; the aged are preſſed by na-
" ture into the ſervice of wiſdom: And if they both
" deſert, vice may triumph without a battle; and vir-
" tue fall without a mourner.

" Ye

"Ye fine men of rank, and parts! a common ſol-
"dier (your contempt, no doubt) ſhall reproach you.
"One of them, requeſting diſmiſſion from CHARLES
"Vth, gave this reaſon for it, *Inter vitæ negotia extre-*
"*mumque diem oportet aliquod temporis intercedere.* Much
"more *inter vitæ voluptates*, and our laſt hour. Will
"you go to your graves with your eyes ſhut, as *Plu-*
"*tarch* tells you the Spartans went to their beds in the
"dark? If ſo, as reaſonable men in years enter their
"graves as a harbour, you will ſtrike on yours, as on
"a rock. You do not only expoſe yourſelves, but
"your whole ſpecies. When they that have moſt reaſon
"to be wiſe, are the fartheſt from it; it ſinks the dig-
"nity of our common nature, brings, beyond all other
"enormities, a reproach on mankind; and gives each
"individual, as a ſufferer, as a ſharer in the ſcandal,
"a juſt right not only of cenſure, but revenge.

"This will excuſe my indignation at two *notorious*
"offenders; and therefore I ſhall dare name them.
"Who are they, but *Sedbury* and *Torriſmond?* Their
"pictures have been partly drawn by the famous *Sey-*
"*mour:* I ſhall ſketch the reſt. Theſe are two perfect
"heroes in this tranſgreſſion; old offenders in an of-
"fence, which, till old, they could not begin: Who
"join the gallantries of *Paris* to the years of *Neſtor:*
"Who read a play-bill, and a bill of mortality, with
"the ſame ſenſation, and aſpect: Who can *amuſe*
"themſelves with a cathedral ſervice: and go for an
"hour's *diverſion* to the funeral of a friend!

"How many friends have they loſt? that is, how
"often has their confidence in the world been ſhaken

" at the root? And give they ſtill full proof of their " obſtinate adherence to, and cordial incorporation " with it? Has it not daily crumbled away in their " fingers? and will they hug it ſtill? How can their " hearts ſtill ſwell with thoſe flattened bubbles of idle " joy, ſo often pricked by death?

" Ye two antediluvian youths! what greater folly " on earth than that of confounding ſeaſons, and not " giving their reſpective appropriations to the different " periods of life? Nothing can be in credit that is out " of character; and credit you affect, no one more. " If you would find it, let theſe gentle hints, like the " light touch of a magic wand, make you ſhrink from " your vernal bloom; and wither at leaſt to the de- " cencies of fourſcore; for I would make you *ſome* al- " lowance ſtill.

" Know ye not, that they who in their wrinkled de- " cline out-dive in folly the temerities of youth, and die " immaturely at twice the age of man, are void of " ſhame from cenſure human, and divine; quite cal- " lous to God, and men? Know you not that ſuch " faults after ſeventy are as ſeverely judged by this " world, as the next? To be born like a wild aſs's " colt, is natural; but not to live ſo, and retain the " colt's tooth, when all the man's are fallen out. Time " was, when to centaurize was leſs ridiculous. But " unleſs your equeſtrian part is now diſmiſſed, laugh- " ter is irreſiſtible; as your friend *Horace* aſſures you:

Solve ſeneſcentem mature ſanus equum, *ne*
Peccet ad extremum ridendus.

" Inſtead

" Inſtead of furfeiting every public place with your " ungodly omnipreſence, you ſhould be reſerved as " the great Mogul. A little ſelf-annihilation would " be the wiſeſt way even for your own vanity; for the " more we forget our age, the more we remind others " of it; and the younger we would appear, ſo much " older ſhall we look, in all eyes but our own.

" Yes, gentlemen! to preſerve your dignity, retire " like eaſtern kings. And kings, indeed, you may " be, and glorious ones too, if you will be wiſe: For " „ wiſdom is the *crown* of old age; and the fear of " „ the Lord is its *glory*."

Since the witchcraft of *Pleaſure* is ſo ſtrong as to turn young men into old, by their infirmities; and old into young, by their affectation, and conceit; let us look a little more narrowly into the perverſe compoſition of that marvellous being, which we ſtyle a *Man of Pleaſure*; and make ſomewhat, if poſſible, like an analyſis of it.

The man of Pleaſure (though I fear he never aſked himſelf the queſtion) of what nature, ſpecies, or rank in the creation conceives he himſelf to be? Does this yet unconſtrued, undecyphered creature conſider himſelf as an *immortal* being? or only as a *rational*? or as a mere *animal*? If as an immortal, let him regard things eternal: If as a rational, let reaſon reign: If as a mere animal, let him indulge appetite; but not go beyond it. When appetite is ſatisfied, an animal's meal is over: If as a compoſition of all three; let it not be a confuſion of them; let it be a *compoſition*; and order alone can preſerve that name.

No; he is for neither of theſe. He is an immortal, without a ſenſe of immortality. He is a rational, dethroning reaſon; and an animal, tranſgreſſing appetite: An unhappy combination, a wretched chaos of all, without the benefit of either: Nay, a ſufferer from each, becauſe an abuſer of all. They are not, as heaven deſigned them, three parties in alliance for his happineſs: but three conſpirators, of his own making, againſt his peace.

For mark this immortal maze of human ruin; appetite, reaſon, and immortality, violate, and are violated by, each other. Subtle reaſon finds arts, and arguments to tempt appetite beyond her bounds. Unbounded appetite with ſtupefying ſenſuality bribes reaſon to drop her dominion. Her dominion dropped renders blind immortality regardleſs of things eternal: And they being diſregarded, all immortality's boundleſs powers, and deſires, devolve on things temporal; and devolved on them, with violence impel depoſed reaſon, and riotous appetite, to monſtrous lengths of extravagance, which had otherwiſe lain quite beyond both their power and deſire.

Thus ſtands the perplexed, and hitherto not unravel'd caſe. The man, in his conſtitution, debauches the brute: The brute debauched, dethrones the man: the dethroned man, and debauched brute, join in rebellion againſt the immortal: The ſubdued immortal reſigns to them its infinite powers and deſires: which they exert to the deſtruction abſolute of all three.

The

The man, if not in alliance with an immortal, never would have had an unbounded power and desire. If not in alliance with a brute, he never would have debased them to mean, and sordid ends; never would have confined them to things below: But being joined to both, and, through perverseness, and stupidity, rendering celestial immortality inglorious, and terrestrial brutality more brutal, he creates a far more miserable being than either of them apart could possibly have been. We may therefore congratulate the *mere* brute on his high prerogative of being incapable of becoming such a monster of rationality as this. And *The Man of Pleasure*, if modest, will, for the future, give the wall to his horse. He, like *Codrus*, disguises himself, puts off his dignity to rush into danger; and happy for him, if he meets with nothing worse than death.

Reason, and immortality, the *man*, and the *immortal*, these only occasion the calamity; and the poor *animal*, an innocent ally, must suffer with them.

If your sister's favourites will contemplate themselves in any glass but their own, let them look in this *true* mirror; and though the features are somewhat monstrous, let them not disown them; since they may change them when they please; and they are pictured so minutely, that they may be the more inclined so to do. For what a hideous ruin of humanity is this? The world after the deluge, a less melancholy sight. Such shocking footsteps sin leaves behind it, in nature animate, and inanimate. Reason, and virtue, are the sole beauty, and sole salvation of all. Through all her

realms creation groans without it. The Deity is all reaſon in his nature, conduct, and commands. The great, invariable, eternal, alternative, throughout his creation, is, or reaſon, or ruin. To how many ears in this happy metropolis is this diſmal news?

I was going to ſay, that reaſon is the ſole baſis of happineſs; but it is not. There are three kinds of happineſs on earth, gradually leſs, and leſs. There is a happineſs from the exertion of reaſon, where reaſon is given: This is the happineſs of a *man*. There is an inferior happineſs from the gratification of ſenſe, where reaſon is denied: This is the happineſs of a *brute*. And there is a calamitous happineſs where reaſon is ſuppreſſed, or abuſed: And this is the happineſs of a *wretch*. You ſee then in what line of happineſs our *fine men* muſt be content to rank.

I know your ſiſter will call my analyſis above, a labyrinth of ſophiſtry. I will therefore give *The Man of Pleaſure*'s character in a manner leſs perplexed, and which ſhe may probably cenſure as too plain; and may wiſh a clue were wanting to find the meaning.

He is one, who, deſirous of being more happy than any man *can* be, is leſs happy than moſt men *are*.

One, who ſeeks happineſs every where, but where it is to be found.

One, who out-toils the labourer, not only without his wages, but paying dearly for it.

He is an immortal being, that has but two marks of a man about him, upright ſtature, and the power of playing the fool, which a monkey has not.

He is an immortal being, that triumphs in this ſingle, deplorable, and yet *falſe* hope, that he ſhall be as happy as a monkey when they are both dead; though he deſpairs of being ſo, while yet alive.

He is an immortal being, that would loſe none of its *moſt* darling delights, if he were a brute in the mire; but would loſe them all intirely, if he were an angel in heaven.

It is certain, therefore, that he deſires not to be there: And if he not ſo much as *deſires* it now, how can he ever *hope* it, when his day of diſſipation is over? And if no hope—what is our Man of Pleaſure? A man of diſtraction, and deſpair, to-morrow.

And who would buy to-day ſo dear, if it were ſo to be bought? as certainly it is not. Doubtleſs the *true* Man of Pleaſure is he, who preſerves order in his compounded nature; and gives the animal, rational, and immortal, their reſpective dues. Who, as *immortal*, places in the ſupreme Being his ſupreme delight; and, as *rational*, ſhunning ſuperſtitious auſterities; and, as *animal*, too great indulgencies; admits of all ſecular enjoyments that are ſtrictly conſiſtent with his *ſupreme*. The *true*, and *falſe*, Man of Pleaſure, are brothers; born of the ſame parent, *viz.* an inextinguiſhable love of delight: But ſo ſuperior is one to the other, that like the fabled brothers *Caſtor* and *Pollux*, one may be ſaid to be in heaven, the other on earth.

To be more explicit, I would gather three particular branches from this general root of happineſs, and preſent them to your ſiſter, as a ſpecimen of the reſt.

There

There is no man of Pleaſure without his Eve; no Eve without her ſerpent; no ſerpent without its ſting. He that knows not the pure delight, and ever-growing tenderneſs of a chaſte love, knows not the moſt that the faireſt can beſtow.

He that knows not the ſound cordiality, and conſtant warmth of a diſintereſted friendſhip, knows not the moſt that man can enjoy from man.

He that keeps not open a conſtant intercourſe with heaven by frequent fervours of rational devotion, knows not a joy ſtill ſublimer than both.

What are the joys of vice, compared to theſe? What think their deluded admirers of a magnanimous triumph over ſtrong temptation; of a ſweet repoſe in divine favour and protection; of an indefeaſible right to life eternal? Is there not a certain grandeur, and ſolidity of happineſs in this? Is not this better than ranging from the gaming-houſe to brothels; and with other little, fluttering, gilded, noxious, liquoriſh, inſects, to be fixing on every nuiſance from delight? Sons of *Beelzebub* the god of flies. I like not a certain, modeſt faintheartedneſs in the friends, and advocates of what is right. A Chriſtian ſhould let all ſee what an animation there is in Chriſtianity above all that the world may admire beſides. Chriſtianity ſhould be the boaſt, as well as comfort, of our hearts.

And now if we enquire after the cauſe which has brought us into that fool's paradiſe, on which I have dwelt ſo long, we ſhall ſee with what good reaſon *Pleaſure*, and *Infidelity*, are joined together in my plan.

The

The Scripture aſcribes the conqueſt of the world, that is, of its Pleaſure, to *faith*; and is very copious in enumerating renowned inſtances of it. Were faith as prevalent in us, we too ſhould prove *Alexanders* in the moral world. All agree, that ſeveral goods being propoſed for our *ultimate* enjoyment, it is impoſſible in our *nature* not to chuſe the *beſt*. All agree, that God's promiſes are better than any thing we can carve for ourſelves. And all agree, that they are inconſiſtent with ſin. So that he who will take out his portion in this life, *muſt* loſe it in the next. What then, againſt our *nature*, and againſt our *reaſon*, hinders us from proſecuting our *chiefeſt good?*—Want of *faith*. All is reſolvable into that alone.

For inſtance. Our temptations are of two kinds. From things that *grieve*, or things that *pleaſe*; the former *fright*, the latter *allure* us, from our virtue. From poverty, pain, diſgrace, or proſecution, we fly to falſehood, or fraud, for eſcape. But thoſe ills are not the immediate cauſe of it; but want of *faith* in God's promiſes, that, "He will ſuccour us in *thoſe* exigen-"cies; and deliver us in his good time; and make all "things work together for our good." On the other hand, when Pleaſure intices, and carries its point; we do not think thoſe Pleaſures, be they what they will, preferable to heaven. But heaven is at a diſtance, and the ſoul is eager for *preſent* good. But why is heaven at a diſtance? for want of faith; for faith is "the *ſub-*"*ſtance* of things hoped for; and the *evidence* of things "not ſeen." It antedates the exiſtence of that which is future; makes "our converſation in heaven, though

" we are ſtill in the body; aſſociates us with angels, " though in our ſolitude; and gives us greater joy in " contemplation, than the world can give in hand." This is true, or the conduct of thoſe heroes in Scripture had been impracticable! and they, like ourſelves, were mere men. Thus *Infidelity* leads to *Pleaſure*; and *Pleaſure* confirms *Infidelity*; and both together conſummate ruin.

Theſe gentlemen ſeem to think that the world was made in jeſt; that there is nothing of moment, or ſerious in it. There is nothing elſe. There is not a fly, but has had infinite wiſdom concerned, not only in its ſtructure, but in its deſtination. And was man made only to flutter, ſing, and expire? A mere expletive in the mighty work, the marvellous operations of the Almighty? Is joy *their* point? He that to the beſt of his power has ſecured the *final ſtake* has a *fons perennis* of joy within him. He is *ſatisfied from himſelf*. They, his reverſe, borrow all from *without*. Joy wholly from without, is falſe, precarious, and ſhort. From without it may be gathered; but, like gathered flowers, though fair, and ſweet for a ſeaſon, it muſt ſoon wither, and become offenſive. Joy from *within*, is like ſmelling the roſe on the tree; it is more ſweet and fair; it is laſting; and, I muſt add, immortal.

As, therefore, I have above offered theſe gentlemen three expedients for happineſs; to perſuade their acceptance of them, I ſhall now give three ſhort maxims, which will ſit light on their memories, and (I hope) in time, eaſy on their hearts.

He

He that will not *fear*, ſhall *feel* the wrath of heaven.

He that lives in the kingdom of *ſenſe*, ſhall die into the kingdom of *ſorrow*.

He ſhall never truly enjoy his *preſent* hour, who never thinks on his *laſt*.

Let your ſiſter, dear Sir, tell her *grey* pretty fellows, who are apoſtles to theſe *Gentiles*, that, if they can advance three maxims of greater truth; or three expedients of greater efficacy to happineſs, than thoſe above-mentioned; I am their convert, I exchange my Bible for Bolingbroke; and prepare for the Ball: For N. B. I am but fourſcore.

With beſt wiſhes to you, and thoſe you love, that is, all mankind; I am,

Dear Sir,

Moſt affectionately,

Yours.

LET-

LETTER III.

ON

PLEASURE.

In Answer to One received.

Dear Sir,

THE contents of your letter damp my joy in hearing from you. Even a good man's approaching death ſtrikes us with *ſome* concern. I am ſorry that the ſting, which *Pleaſure* left in your unhappy friend, occaſions ſo ſwift a decline. How naturally we lay hold on heaven when the world ſinks under us, and will ſupport our hopes no more! The piece of devotion which you deſire, you ſhall receive in my next. I cannot reflect on your friend's diſtreſs, and a noble youth whom I myſelf attended in his extremes, without dwelling ſtill longer on *Pleaſure*, which has coſt the world ſo dear.

If diſeaſe, and infirmity, make us daily viſits in the perſons of our neighbours, and friends; and death, by the ſame affecting meſſengers, gives us frequent notice that he will be with us ſoon:

If

If, when death arrives, all mankind, however divided before, unanimouſly cloſe in one opinion, and one wiſh:

If libertine enjoyments haſten the approach, and heighten the dread, and imbitter the conſequences, of death:

If death is the ſingle event ſure, and virtue the ſingle purſuit indefeaſible; and the Divine Favour the ſingle point of abſolute importance:

If that favour comes ſo cheap, that the very leavings (in time, care, and expence) of our *real* enjoyments, would go a great way in the purchaſe of it:

If the martyr's blood makes that purchaſe ſure: and it is impoſſible that *martyrdom*, and *voluptuouſneſs*, ſhould ſhare the ſame fate:

If the fate to be ſhared is endleſs; and this life but as a moment to an age; and an age not a moment to eternity; and eternity as much ours, as the preſent hour:

If he, that is over-fond of the *preſent*, or high in expectation from any *future*, hour, either knows not *this* world; or believes not in the *next*:

If all this is true; that is, if it is day at noon; how happy, like your friend *Euſebius*, to ſtrike early into the right path; and not ſo long to ſlumber in indulgence, like the noble youth (of whom I ſhall ſoon ſpeak), as to ſuffer the birth-day of our underſtanding to be the laſt day of our lives?

I told you, in a former letter, that I would give you your friend *Euſebius*'s character at large: not, to be ſure,

for

for your information; but to place him in oppoſition to the *Men of Pleaſure:* And ſo,

Facem præferre pudendis. Juv.

that their deformity may be ſet in a ſtronger light, for the benefit of thoſe weak eyes, who cannot ſee a mountain without ſpectacles; with whom a *Centaur* paſſes for a man. Or, rather, who think a Man of Pleaſure an extremely happy creature, and, with antient aſtronomers, place the *Centaur* in heaven. Their *Sagittarius* there, or eternal hunter, ever aiming at *Pleaſure*, and ever miſſing his mark. How very much, the character of *Euſebius* will plainly ſhew.

Men of Pleaſure, notwithſtanding all the thorns they meet with in their flowery path, imagine all would enter it, but for want of taſte, or ſpirit, or purſe: *Euſebius* wants none of theſe. He wants not a taſte for aught that can gratify either imagination or ſenſe; that can make a coxcomb or debauché; but he is neither. Nor wants he a purſe, or heart, to provide thoſe gratifications. His purſe is large; larger his heart; but not corrupt, and nobly *wrong*. He is young, gay, rich, expenſive. So far he is with them; but will leave them ſoon, as the ſun ſlides from under an eclipſe. *His* riches widen the circle of his virtues. *Their* riches increaſe the number of their crimes. There are two kinds of expence: in both, riches make themſelves wings, and fly away. But widely different in their flight: in one they fly away as an eagle towards heaven: in their flight beautiful, and celeſtial in their end. In the other, they fly away as an owl to the deſart: ungracious and ill-omen'd, in their flight, and ending in the deſart of ignominy, and ruin.

Euſebius,

Euſebius, though liberal to the demands of nature, rank, and duty; ſtarves vice, caprice, and folly. Theſe (the great cormorants of gold), he ſends begging to *their* doors; they, as old intimates, welcome and embrace them all. And if they have not thrice the fortune of *Euſebius*, muſt ſoon be beggars themſelves. While he, with one half *they* ſink in a debauch, lifts beggars (beggars, I mean from fortune, not from folly) into the real comforts of life.

He too has his *amuſements*; but not ſuch as deaden, but revive: ſuch as recover the relaxed tone of application; re-animate to new effort; and thus are eſſential, though pauſing, parts of noble, well-judging *induſtry*. He ſtarts not at a maſquerade: nor thinks cards the books of the devil. But thinks all our diverſions like long books, that were better epitomized; or, like the books of the *Sybil*, which, as they were leſſened in number, roſe in their price.

He, as well as they, has his parks, gardens, grottos, caſcades, ſtatues, paintings, *&c.* but enjoys them more. Not becauſe his are better than theirs, but becauſe he is better than they. His paintings have beauties unborrowed from the pencil; and his ſtatues in *his* eyes appear, like *Pygmalion*'s, to live; though *mere* marble in *theirs*. His all-animating joy within gives graces to art, and ſmiles to nature, inviſible to common eyes. Objects of ſenſe, and imagination, for the greater power of pleaſing, are indebted to the goodneſs of his heart. For as the ſun is itſelf the moſt glorious of objects, and makes all others ſhine, ſo virtue itſelf is the greateſt of pleaſures, and of all other pleaſures redoubles the delight.

He,

He, and they, though they both value riches, yet entertain widely different opinions about them. He conſiders a great fortune, as his being put, by a kind providence, into its honourable commiſſion for doing much good. They conſider it as a privilege, or at leaſt as an excuſe, for the contrary. He ſurveying his ample arcades, and lofty domes, rejoices more in what benefits others, than what aggrandizes himſelf: rejoices more in conſidering how many mouths he has fed, than in conſidering how many eyes he has drawn. He triumphs in reflecting to what numbers he has been enabled, by the divine indulgence, to turn, without a miracle, thoſe ſtones into bread. They, from their huge Babel-like buildings, contract a Babel-like pride, which turns, with regard to thoſe beneath them, their hearts into ſtone. Such men, in effect, build *downward*, are the more ignoble, that is the lower, for their height.

He thinks, that heaven's rich donations imply in them ſome tranſfer to the public: *they* think they imply a tranſfer of the public homage to themſelves. Inſtead of imagining his grandeur to be a demand on the public for its homage, he looks on it as the public's demand on him for bounty, and patronage, of which he has erected ſuch proud promiſes; and by them raiſed ſo juſt an expectation. He thinks, that their riches (how ſtrangely ſoever it may ſound) run them in debt; and that not to *benefit*, is, to *defraud*.

His humility is equal to his magnificence; and as magnificence with humility ſpeaks more regard for others, than himſelf, it eſcapes envy, and enſures general applauſe. *Their* pride defeats their magnificence,

and

and robs it of that applauſe which is its ſingle aim: For it is a great authority which tells us, *That pride "is a tree which eats up its own fruit."*

He knows (what *they* conſider not), that ſplendid ſuperiorities cannot be *neutral*, with regard to the characters of thoſe who poſſeſs them; that, therefore, men poſſeſs them at their peril; that they muſt degrade, if they do not exalt them. That heaven, which in ſpight of different ranks, levels happineſs, deſigned it as the peculiar curſe of the great (if they deſerve it) to be leſſened by grandeur, and illuſtriouſly diſgraced. That, if *apes*, and *crocodiles*, men hurtful, or ridiculous, inhabit ſuperb piles, they muſt deſpair of being worſhipped: though, but through vain and keen appetite for public incenſe, they never had been built.

You ſee in how many points theſe men fall ſhort of *Euſebius* in Pleaſure from *expence*; which, notwithſtanding, is an article on which they pique themſelves not a little. And give me leave to ſubjoin one more particular, which will affect them leſs than the former, tho' it ought to affect them moſt of all; *his* wealth has ſubterranean channels; bleſſes unſeen; and coſts the relieved neither bluſhes, nor thanks. Not one priſon have *they* opened; not one tear have *they* dried; which might ſpeak in their favour, when their *own* begin to flow. The ſorrows we have relieved are the ſureſt ſupport in our own. The beſt that can be ſaid of *their* expences, is, that they are an unwilling encomium on thoſe of your friend.

Senſual, of all our pleaſures are the meaneſt; how low muſt a ſoul celeſtial ſtoop for them! Yet theſe our thirſty ſpunges of ſenſuality, who ſuck up every drop of it, in

or *out* of, their way, tho' they take up the dirt with it, prefer to all the reſt. And in theſe, if in any, they will venture to diſpute his ſuperiority. But, for reaſons, ſome already mentioned; more, moſt obvious: he is their ſuperior in theſe. In pleaſures *intellectual*, how far are they behind him! and then the *moral*, they are all his own. It is one of their minute, and meagre pleaſures, profeſſedly to decline them: And theſe are the *ſupreme*. Moral pleaſures, tho' faintly (in this imperfect ſtate), yet truly taſte of heaven; and, what is more, inſure that heaven of which they taſte. And what an ineſtimable ſuperiority is this! He that can think of death undiſmay'd,

Extremumque diem vitæ inter munera ponit. LU.

has more enjoyment, even in diſtreſs, than they in triumph, with every vain amuſement turning reaſon out of doors, leſt it ſhould wound them with one whiſper of the grave. On how many melancholy occaſions in life ſhould we be glad of an aſylum to which to fly? How ſhould we be tranſported with a thought that had infallible comfort in it? And that thought can be but one; and that one, it is the conſtant aim, labour, nay boaſt, of theſe wiſe men to deſtroy.

Euſebius's love of pleaſure is equal to theirs; whence then this vaſt inequality of happineſs? He *commands* his pleaſures; ſome he cultivates; ſome admits cautiouſly; others ſends bluſhing away. *Their* pleaſures *domineer*; ſcout them away on vileſt errands; bid them throw their patrimony in the dirt of proſtitution, or debauch; or dungeon them in midnight dens of fraud, and deſtruc-

tion; and command them to whirl it away with a losing card, or stamp it to nothing with a desperate dye. What scaffolds of fatal execution are those guilty boards, where moments determine on fortunes for life; and rage and distraction threaten ruin eternal?

From this thraldom to their pleasures, this wretched impotence of heart, it is, that while *he* has but one, and that a most gracious Master, *they* have as many tyrants as there are follies, and vices, in the world. Ten times a day they change their *Pharaoh*; and why? Because his wages are so poor. They have it, indeed, in their power to change their master, but not to break their chain.

The *Romans* once pretended that they had a golden shield which fell from heaven: To secure it from theft, they laid it up among eleven others made of brass. This expedient had been unnecessary against *their* wisdom. They run away by choice with the eleven *counterfeits*; with a multitude of false, ineffectual pleasures, and leave the celestial, as of no value, to men of less understanding.—Virtue, the delight of *Eusebius*, is a celestial shield against every evil of human life. *Their* pleasures are rather swords, that *pierce them through with many sorrows*.

The contrast how strong! Their pleasures die in fruition, and are remembered with regret. His survive the present actual enjoyment, and are as sweet in retrospect, as in hand. Theirs lessen on repetition; his increase: Theirs create, and aggravate, calamities; his avert most, and alleviate the rest: Theirs hasten death, and heighten

heighten its horror; his owe their perfection to his final hour, after having heightened, and lengthened, all the bleſſings of life. And what a wretch is that happineſs, and what an idiot that wiſdom, that can offer no comfort in the days of darkneſs, and the hours of death? In a word, *their* wretched joys flouriſh, like diſmal weeping willows watered by a ditch: Poor the figure they make; flux and obſcene the ground on which they ſtand: *His* flouriſh, like cedars of *Libanus*, from the fountains of heaven; and are rooted in a rock; the rock of his ſalvation.

It is this ſuperior ground on which he ſtands, which imparts that inimitable ſweetneſs of air, aſpect, and deportment, which marks him, among multitudes of the gayeſt, for the gay. *They*, like things gilt, have much to ſhew; much more to hide; are all darkneſs within. *He*, like a diamond, is tranſparent, and ſhines at heart. He looks, as if *virtue*, according to the wiſh of ſome ſages, was at laſt become viſible, and ſhone through him; in perſon, not precept, making a viſit to mankind: And man is mended by looking on him.

Now, pleaſe, Sir, to obſerve, to what an aſtoniſhing degree that intellectual darkneſs, mentioned in my former letter, prevails in theſe men, that would outſhine all the world. What is their chief boaſt? Why this, that they *make the moſt* of this life. Whereas the very fundamental difference between them, and *Euſebius*, is, That they make nothing of this world, becauſe they deſign to make their all of it. He makes much of this world, becauſe he holds it as little; becauſe ever having the ſentiments, without the terrors, of a death-bed, he

never cuts off this life from the thoughts of the next; but ſees his whole exiſtence in one unbroken thread extended before him.

But, before I diſmiſs your friend *Euſebius* (though he has made you a very long viſit), I muſt take notice of one particular more. Theſe gentlemen pique themſelves on their epitome of all virtue and religion, *benevolence:* If they had it, it would confute moſt I have ſaid; and make them very happy: For it may ſtand as a general maxim, that men are happy in proportion to their good-will: Nor is it ſtrange, that to the greateſt duty, ſhould, by nature, belong the greateſt reward. But their title to this virtue is not clear. The reaſon they ſo loudly pretend to it, is, becauſe they know they have it not. The weakeſt ſide of a citadel is to be defended moſt. *Euſebius*, on *his* principles, *muſt* have univerſal good-will. Self-love obliges him to it; and his own happy ſtate of mind inclines him the ſame way: For all are moſt kind to others, when moſt eaſy, and pleaſed with themſelves. On *their* principles, that this world is *all*; or, at leaſt, all they will concern themſelves about; ſelf-love obliges them to the contrary: And their uneaſineſs in themſelves ſeconds that obligation: So that you may as well expect to find an angel among the diſſolute, as a friend. And, indeed, can any expect that they ſhould love them, better than their own ſouls? Yet that would they do, if they car'd for them at all.

But, inſtead of endeavouring to prove what needs no proof, I ſhall preſent you with the picture of one of theſe great lovers of all mankind, if you will promiſe not to cut his throat; which picture, better than a *De-*

moſthenes,

noſthenes, will prove my point. You will know whom I mean, when I tell you, that he is enamoured of the charms, and deep in the myſteries of *play*. That is, he is ſo fond of riches (which a good judge tells us || *nemo bonus unquam concupivit)*, of riches is he ſo over-fond, that he is quite miſerable if denied a daily chance of being ſtripped to beggary. Greater profeſſions of friendſhip can no man make, than this arch promiſer: greater proofs of the contrary can no man give. He never did a favour, that proved barren to his own deſigns, but he ſent a curſe after it. All his kindneſſes are artificial flies; if nothing is caught, they are pocketed again. "*Hook him, or hang him,*" is a favourite maxim of his own coining. He ſmiles, indeed, with great complacency on a crouded levee of devoted friends; with no leſs than on a hand of good cards. And his hope from both is juſt the ſame; that is, ſo to play them off, as to win his game. That done, if intereſt, or humour, bids, he throws them aſide as a foul pack, and calls for new; to ſhuffle, and cheat, and play tricks with, as before. He conſiders fools, as trumps, with which he is ſure to win. If there are no fools to be taken in, he makes a pretty good hand of it with a knave of the right ſuit. If he is ſo unlucky as not to be bleſſed with either, he gives out, and, for that time, plays no more: For, without a good hand, a bad heart is inſupportable. But proſperity ſooths remorſe, and lays conſcience aſleep. This is one who knows the world; which, generally, means, one that knows not God. He never thought of that great, final ſtake, with regard to which he, that honeſtly but deſires it, is ſure to win; and he

|| Salluſt.

that plays foul the moſt dextrouſly, is ſure to be undone. Such is *Avidienus*, ſuch is that *good* man, who, as freely as eat his meal, could lay down his life for his friend.

But, in excuſe for ſuch men, I muſt own, that, for ſuch as place their all here, there can be no ſhadow of ſocial happineſs, but from deceiving, or being deceived. From *deceiving*, and ſo finding ſome account in their villany; or from *being deceived*, and ſo finding ſome account in their folly. For real friendſhip amongſt them is impoſſible: And, indeed, to hope a friend in any man, that is not truly his own friend, is abſurd. From this account, it is evident, that the chief fountain of happineſs is dried up in their hearts.

A *wretch*, almoſt ſmothered with all the reputed means of happineſs, would of all objects be the moſt ridiculous, were it not the moſt melancholy too. *Diogenes* went about the city of *Athens* begging to the ſtatues; being aſked the reaſon, he ſaid, He was learning to bear a repulſe. Theſe gentlemen ſhould learn the ſame leſſon; no ſtatue can be deafer than moſt of their purſuits, when they aſk *real* pleaſure of them.

Theſe are the men, who, while Providence lays the reins of free-will on their wanton necks, ruſh headlong into even unimportunate temptations. But when it ſhall put *its hook in their noſe, and its bridle in their jaws*; when it ſhall drag them into the condition of your unhappy friend; or worſe, when the tattered, convulſed, body ſhall be ſhaking out an unwilling ſoul, loth to leave it for a ſtill worſe habitation; then, oh! what a change! It places full before me the laſt hours of that noble youth

youth I mentioned above. *Laſt hours* full of anguiſh! how fit to be remembered by thoſe that wiſh peace to their own! This is the *funeral* to which, in my firſt letter, I promiſed to invite your ſiſter *Sempronia*, and her gay admirers; *Sempronia*, who delights *pſallere, & cantare, elegantius quam neceſſe eſt probæ*. And what invitation more kind than that for which ſhe may thank me for ever, when other entertainments end? If *they* have their wine, *this* has its nectar. Its cup of ſalvation, preſſed from that *Vine, whoſe leaves heal the nations*, and whoſe ſwelling cluſters teem with eternal bliſs. Funeral ſolemnities are more for the ſake of the living than the *dead*. What a trifle that honour they receive from them, to the benefit *we* may reap from that affecting ſcene!

Oh! Sir, how affecting! It is ſtill before my eyes. That wretched youth dies again! Again I am ſmitten with his death. It wounds me even in remembrance: What, then, the ſcene itſelf! No words can paint it; no time efface it; I meet it in my dreams; I ſhall bear it to my grave.

I am about to repreſent to you the laſt hours of a perſon of high birth, and high ſpirit; of great parts, and ſtrong paſſions, every way accompliſhed, nor leaſt in iniquity. His unkind treatment was the death of a moſt amiable wife; and his great extravagance, in effect, diſinherited his only child.

But to my point. The *death-bed* of a profligate is next in horror to that abyſs, to which it leads. It has the moſt of hell that is viſible on earth. And he that has ſeen it, has more than *faith* to confirm him in his creed.

I ſee it now. For who can forget it? Are there in it no flames, and furies?—You know not, then, what a ſcar'd imagination can figure, what a guilty heart can feel. How diſmal is it! The two great enemies of ſoul and body, *ſickneſs* and *ſin*, ſink and confound his friend; ſilence, and darken the ſhocking ſcene. Sickneſs excludes the *light* of heaven; and ſin, its bleſſed *hope*. Oh! double darkneſs! more than *Egyptian!* Acutely to be *felt!*

How unlike thoſe illuminated revels of which he was the ſoul! Did this poor, pallid, ſcarce-animated maſs dictate in the cabinet of *pleaſure*; pronounce the faſhion; and teach the gayeſt to be gay? Are theſe the trophies of his *Paphian* conqueſts? Theſe the triumphs to be bought with heaven? Is this he who ſmote all *their* hearts with envy at his pre-eminence in guilt? See, how he lies a ſad, deſerted outcaſt, on a narrow iſthmus between time and eternity? for he is ſcarce alive. Laſh'd and overwhelmed on one ſide, by the ſenſe of ſin; on the other, by the dread of puniſhment! Beyond the reach of human help, and in deſpair of divine!

His diſſipated fortune, impoveriſh'd babe, and murder'd wife, lie heavy on him: The ghoſt of his murder'd time (for now no more is left), all ſtain'd with folly, and gaſh'd with vice, haunts his diſtracted thought. Conſcience, which long had ſlept, *awakes like a giant refreſhed with wine*; lays waſte all his *former* thoughts, and deſires; and, like a long-depos'd, *now* victorious prince, on his bleeding heart, impoſes, inflicts, its *own*. Its late ſoft whiſpers are *thunder* in his

his ears; and all means of grace rejected, exploded, ridiculed, is the *bolt* that ſtrikes him dead. Dead even to the thoughts of death. In deeper diſtreſs, deſpair of life is forgot. He lies a wretched wreck of man on the ſhore of eternity, and the next breath he draws, blows him off into ruin.

The greateſt profligate is, at leaſt, a momentary ſaint, at ſuch a ſight: For this is a ſight which plucks off the maſk of folly, ſtrips her of her gay diſguiſe, which glittered in the falſe lights of this world's mummery, and makes her appear to be folly, to the greateſt fool.

How think we then? Is not the death-bed of a profligate the moſt natural and powerful antidote for the poiſon of his example? Heals not the bruiſed ſcorpion the wound it gave? Intends not heaven, that, ſtruck with the terrors of ſuch an exit, we ſhould provide comfort for our own? Would not he, who departs obdurate from it, continue adamant, though one roſe from the dead? For ſuch a ſcene partly draws aſide the curtain that divides time from futurity; and, in ſome meaſure, gives to ſight that *tremendous*, of which we only had the feeble report before.

Is not this then a prime ſchool of wiſdom? Are not they obliged, that are invited to this? For what elſe ſhould reclaim us? The pulpit? We are prejudiced againſt it. Beſides, an agonizing profligate, though *ſilent*, out-preaches the moſt celebrated that the pulpit ever knew: But, if he *ſpeaks*, his words might inſtruct the beſt inſtructors of mankind. Mixt in the warm

converſe of life, we think with men; on a death-bed, with God.

But there are two leſſons of this ſchool written, as it were, in capitals, which they that run may read. *Firſt*, He that, in this his minority, this ſchool of diſcipline, this field of conflict, inſtead of graſping the weapons of his warfare, is for ever gathering flowers, and catching at butterflies, with his unarmed hand; ever making idle Pleaſures his purſuit; muſt pay for it his vaſt reverſion; and, on opening his final account (of which a death-bed breaks the ſeal), ſhall find himſelf a beggar; a beggar paſt beggary; and ſhall paſſionately wiſh, that his very being were added to the reſt of his loſs.

Secondly, He ſhall find, that *truth*, Divine Truth, however, through life, injured, wounded, ſuppreſſed, is inſuppreſſible, victorious, immortal. That, though with mountains overwhelmed, it will, one day, burſt out like the fires of *Ætna*; viſible, bright, and tormenting, as the moſt raging flame. As now, (Oh! my friend!) I ſhall too plainly prove.

The ſad evening before the death of that noble youth, whoſe laſt hours ſuggeſted theſe thoughts, I was with him. No one was there, but his phyſician, and an intimate whom he loved, and whom he had ruined. At my coming in, he ſaid;

"You, and the phyſician, are come too late.—I "have neither life, nor hope. You both aim at mi- "racles. You would raiſe the dead."

Heaven, I ſaid, was merciful—

"Or I could not have been thus guilty. What "has it not done to *bleſs*, and to *ſave* me?—I have "been too ſtrong for Omnipotence! I plucked down "ruin."

I ſaid, The Bleſſed Redeemer—

"Hold! hold! you wound me!—That is the rock "on which I ſplit—I denied his name."

Refuſing to hear any thing from me, or take any thing from the phyſician, he lay ſilent, as far as ſudden darts of pain would permit, till the clock ſtruck. Then with vehemence;

"Oh, Time! Time! It is fit thou ſhould'ſt thus "ſtrike thy murderer to the heart.—How art thou fled "for ever!—A month!—Oh, for a ſingle week! I aſk "not for years. Though an age were too little for "the much I have to do."

On my ſaying, we could not do too much: That heaven was a bleſſed place—

"So much the worſe. 'Tis loſt! 'Tis loſt!—Hea-"ven is to me the ſevereſt part of hell."

Soon after, I propoſed prayer.

"Pray you that can. I never prayed. I cannot "pray.—Nor need I. Is not heaven on my ſide al-"ready? It cloſes with my conſcience. Its ſevereſt "ſtrokes but ſecond my *own*."

His friend being much touch'd, even to tears, at this (who could forbear? I could not), with a moſt affectionate look, he ſaid:

" Keep thoſe tears for Thyſelf. I have undone " thee.—Doſt weep for me? That's cruel. What can " pain me more?"

Here his friend, too much affected, would have left him.

" No, ſtay. *Thou* ſtill may'ſt *hope*.—Therefore hear " me. How madly have I talk'd? How madly haſt " thou liſtened, and believed? But look on my preſent " ſtate, as a full anſwer to thee, and to myſelf. This " body is all weakneſs and pain; but my ſoul, as if " ſtung up by torment to greater ſtrength and ſpirit, " is full powerful to reaſon; full mighty to ſuffer. " And that, which thus triumphs within the jaws of " mortality, is, doubtleſs, *immortal*.—And, as for a " *Deity*, nothing leſs than an Almighty could inflict " what I feel."

I was about to congratulate this paſſive, involuntary, confeſſor, on his aſſerting the two prime articles of his creed, extorted by the rack of nature; when he thus, very paſſionately:

" No, no! let me ſpeak on. I have not long to " ſpeak—My much-injured friend! my ſoul, as my " body, lies in ruins; in ſcattered fragments of bro- " ken thought: Remorſe for the paſt throws my " thought on the future. Worſe dread of the future, " ſtrikes it back on the paſt. I turn, and turn, and " find no ray. Didſt thou feel half the mountain that " is on me, thou would'ſt ſtruggle with the martyr for " his ſtake; and bleſs heaven for the flames:—*That*

" is

" is not an everlaſting flame; *That* is not an un-
" quenchable fire."

How were we ſtruck! Yet, ſoon after, ſtill more. With what an eye of diſtraction, what a face of deſpair, he cried out:

" My principles have poiſoned my friend; my ex-
" travagance has beggared my boy; my unkindneſs
" has murdered my wife!—And is there another hell?
" —Oh! Thou blaſphemed, yet moſt indulgent, Lord
" God! hell itſelf is a refuge, if it hides me from
" thy frown."

Soon after, his underſtanding failed. His terrified imagination uttered horrors not to be repeated, or ever forgot. And ere the ſun (which I hope has ſeen few like him) aroſe, the gay, young, noble, ingenious, accompliſhed, and moſt wretched, *Altamont* expired.

If this is a man of Pleaſure, what is a man of pain? How quick, how total, is the tranſit of theſe *Phaetontiades!* In what a diſmal gloom they ſet for ever! How ſhort, alas! the day of their rejoicing! *For* a moment they glitter, they dazzle. *In* a moment where are they? Oblivion covers their memories.—Ah! would it did! Infamy ſnatches them from oblivion. In the long-living annals of infamy their triumphs are recorded. Thy ſufferings ſtill bleed in the boſom (Poor *Altamont!*) of the heart-ſtricken friend: For *Altamont had* a friend. He might have had many. With what capacities was he endowed, with what advantages, for being greatly good! But with the talents

lents of an angel a man may be a fool. If he judges amiſs in the ſupreme point, judging right in all elſe but aggravates his folly; as it ſhews him wrong, tho' bleſſed with the beſt capacity of doing right.

Such, ſo fatal, when abuſed, are the greateſt bleſſings of heaven. Heaven grant *his* agonies were an expiation of the paſt; not a preſage, and ſad ſpecimen, of the future. That his ſurviving companions and admirers may never ſuffer the ſame, give me leave to ſpeak to them, while this affecting object is (or might be) in their ſight.

"Ye ſtaunch purſuers of Pleaſure, opening in full "cry on its burning ſcent! who run yourſelves out of "breath, health, credit, eſtate, and often life, after "that you cannot catch! For a moment, ſlacken your "ſpeed, and cool the fervor of your chace. It is a "friend that calls, and he is his *own* that hears.

"If there is a ſcene on earth, in which you can find "greater advantage, than in that to which you have "been invited, do not come: If there is not, indulge "me in a few words, which may not be ſoon forgot: "At leaſt, they will recur to your thought, they will "recur to your feeling hearts, when your preſent jo-"vial chace is over; when *Pleaſure* is no more.

"It will be grateful to your friend deceaſed, whom "you were always willing to oblige, if, with his ac-"compliſhments, you remember his faults; for then "you will not forget your *own*; but read, in his deep "diſtreſs, a ſtrong caution againſt them. Affords not

"the

" the rock on which he ſplit, a ſolid baſis for your " ſafety? Has he not well marked where miſchief " lies? See you not the wreck of that gallant firſt- " rate? or, rather, is he not a beacon, lighted up by " kind Providence, to guide you ſafe through the " dangerous voyage of human life?

" He once, as you now, imagined himſelf in this " life, immortal. Was he not miſtaken? He has taken " his final flight; whither, who can tell? If you con- " tinue yours, in the ſame fatal track, who is he that " *cannot* tell where the folly muſt end? Smitten, tranſ- " fixed, when moſt ſecure, from the moſt towering " heights he dropped, at once, into depths of diſtreſs, " not to be fathomed by man. In gaiety of heart defy " not the danger. Are there not more arrows in " the ſame quiver? and are not you as fair and tempt- " ing a mark? more tempting, if unadmoniſhed, and " mounting ſtill over his forgotten tomb. And whom " dare you attempt? An Archer that never miſſed " his mark.

" But you, from your gay pavilion, embowered in " roſes, ſee no threatening proſpects; no dangers of " death.—— Oh, Sirs! Death delights to lie hid in " thickets of roſes! How often the gayeſt fall firſt in " his ſnare! Yet even this is too gentle, too mild, to " anſwer the good-will of heaven; it cannot keep " the world in awe.

" What

" What uncommon fortitude is needful to bear " proſperities unhurt? It is now ſunſhine with you; " and you think all is well. It is the ſeaſon of indul- " gence.—But ſeaſons will change. You that are " now all ſocial comfort, gathered cloſe in glad cluſ- " ters, and (like embodied birds of paſſage bound " for new climes) on your impatient wing for new de- " lights! what will you do, when each of you, ſe- " vered from the reſt, an unexperienced, unexpected, " recluſe, lies ſorely pain'd; dreading worſe; none " to converſe with, but the two greateſt ſtrangers, his " own heart, and Him who made it; and neither at " peace with him? Say, ye ſtrangers to care, and " abounders in mirth! what will he do, when he finds " himſelf ſtill ſubſiſting in a ſtate, where none of thoſe " pleaſures, for which alone he wiſhed to ſubſiſt, can " poſſibly any longer ſubſiſt with him? When the " dark matter at the centre will not be more foreign " to him, than that which now beats high in his " pulſe, and flushes in his cheek! and ſtings him on " to ſchemes, that laugh at ſuch lectures as theſe? " When he finds himſelf led, by the ſoft hand of " *Pleaſure*, to thoſe diſmal gates, which ſhe herſelf " will never, never, never, enter?

" Conſider, my good friends! you ſtill retain the " name of Chriſtians; and have heard of the Scrip- " tures. To ſpeak their language, If Chriſtians are " racers, you have not yet ſtarted: If warriors, your " armour is not yet on: If labourers in the vineyard, " you pluck down the vine, and get drunk with the " grapes:

" grapes: If watchmen, your nap is not yet over.
" There is no man, but in ſome part of life, either
" ſtung by ſelf-mov'd conſcience, or alarmed by ſome
" providential event, as out of a long idle dream,
" ſtarts, at once, into his ſenſes. The longer the
" dream, the greater his ſurprize and pain; and if he
" nods to the laſt, the pain and horror (as too well has
" been prov'd) is inexpreſſible.

" Cannot that awful truth interrupt your ſlumber?
" He ſleeps ſound indeed, at whoſe ear a friend's
" knell ſhall knock in vain. But, ſetting friendſhip
" aſide; granting, that with men of your caſt, a friend
" dead is a friend annihilated; aſk, I beſeech you,
" pure *ſelf-intereſt* one queſtion; " Have you no con-
" cern in *this death? Is it nothing to you?*" —— Oh!
" much, very much! It cannot ſtand neuter. It is big
" with good or ill. It muſt haſten your amendment,
" or heighten your offence. Henceforth, the *ſame*
" crimes are ſevenfold guilt!

" Have you never conſulted the workings of na-
" ture? Have you never been *ſurprized* with a ſerious
" feeling of heart? When I ſtand, though a ſtranger,
" on the verge of another's grave; when I ſee the
" ſhaken mould take poſſeſſion of human pride; and
" hear the ſolemn ſound of *duſt to duſt*; what ſwelling
" of ſoul, but inſtantly ſubſides? What ſaluta y
" thoughts, but, at once, it inſpires? The grave of
" one unknown, and dying a *common* death, would
" have this effect: What then, the grave of a friend,
" and of our *own* character; and that not good; and

" dying

" dying of the follies in which *we* live; and with " admonitions in his mouth, and horrors in his heart? " What heart impregnable to ſuch an aſſault? What " thunder equal to ſuch a groan? It would echo for " ever in a penetrable ear. In a penetrable heart there " would be wrought a mighty change.

" For ſee you not the mighty force that is implied in " this mercy? Heaven truſts not to your faith; but " gives *ſenſible* proof of what you have to fear. And " could it do more? Would a miracle ſuffice?—You " have it in a mercy ſo little deſerved. If danger " can alarm you, you, *now*, are alarmed. If nothing " can alarm you, nothing can ſave.

" I ſhould grieve to have ſaid too much. Yet, " have I ſaid too much, if my words ſerve only to " render more inexcuſable that imprudence, which " they labour to remove. Rather know your danger, " and embrace the plank (though not of cedar) which " I throw out for your eſcape. Our fondneſs for " good, ſhuts our eyes on evil; we ſcarce allow it " exiſtence before it is felt. But, remember, we live " in a moſt mutable ſcene; and have the fear of to- " morrow before your eyes. Not the keeneſt diſcern- " ment can ken through the ſecond of a minute. To " keep within the reach of mercy, is the grand con- " cern, and ſupreme bleſſing of human life.

" My *converted!* or *condemned!*
" farewell."

Thus,

Thus, dear Sir, I ſpeak to theſe gentlemen. I wiſh they do not rather chuſe to ſhew their parts, than their penitence; and criticiſe my *ſpeech*, inſtead of their own conduct. If ſo, they demonſtrate how very great occaſion there was of *it*; though it proves ineffectual.

Moſt Yours.

LETTER

LETTER IV.

ON

PLEASURE.

DEAR SIR,

YOU ſeem to think, in your laſt letter, that our age is ſo far gone, as to be paſt recovery. I hope not. *Aviola*, a conſul in the time of *Gordian*, revived on his funeral pile. I will not deſpair, but that *Britiſh* virtue, now, like the *phœnix*, dying in its *ſweets*, may ſtart up from its aſhes, and re-aſſume its former glory. I ſhall therefore proceed a little farther.

I grant, that *The Man of Pleaſure*, as well as the good man, has his joy. But their joys are very different. They differ not only in their objects, but their kind. Which is as yet a ſecret to *them*; and, poſſibly, to you. Joy from temporals, is a terreſtrial joy. And, like all things terreſtrial, has a dreg in it. If you obſerve your own heart, you will find, that joy from temporals, has ever ſomewhat of a gay inquietude, a diſturbed and

tumul-

tumultuous delight. Like ſome liquors, all in unquiet ferment and confuſion, while they ſparkle, and ſmile. Joy from eternals, joy, I mean, on ſpiritual accounts *(viz.) Mens conſcia recti*; or, a delightful hope of immortality; or an humble perſuaſion of Divine Favour, *&c.* This joy is celeſtial, and, like a fine calm ſummer's evening, is undiſturbed, placid, and ſerene. The firſt is a *paſſion*, and that in the ſtricteſt ſenſe; we *ſuffer* from it, as well as *enjoy*. Nay, ſome have ſuffered from it even to death. The latter ſeems rather to be, or to reſemble, an *inſpiration*, in which the divine cauſe takes away, or ſuperſedes, our human infirmity. Therefore, by our church, moſt properly ſtiled *The Peace of God*. Nor let *Centaurs* imagine, that this peace is occaſioned by the ſmallneſs of the joy. No, *It paſſeth all underſtanding*; and is, ſtrictly ſpeaking, a ſpecimen, an actual part of heaven.

For, indeed, the *ſupreme* happineſs, and miſery, of rational beings, through all variation of circumſtances, and through every period of their exiſtence, is of a piece, or of the ſame kind. Though, perhaps, in no two periods of it, of the ſame proportion, or degree. Therefore, heaven and hell, how diſtant ſoever ſome think them, are *really*, though not *fully*, on earth. Where-ever, and whenever, their cauſes, that is, virtue and vice, exiſt, they will exiſt, in a meaſure correſpondent to them. What then are the *good* and *bad*, but the wretched and happy? He, whoſe ſoul repoſes on his firm truſt in God, like the halcyon that builds on the waves, if ſtorms ariſe, may be toſſed, but not endangered.

gered. Or, grant the worſt, thoſe tumultuous billows that devour others, rock him to reſt eternal.

When the good man lies down to reſt, no fears from the dangers of the night break through his ſtrong confidence in the Divine Protection. When he awakes, his firſt thought lays hold on heaven; which gives thro' the conſecrated day, ſuch a ſweetneſs of aſpect and deportment, ſuch a force and firmneſs to his felicity; that we may venture almoſt to ſay, *He cometh forth as a bridegroom from his chamber, and rejoiceth, as a giant, to run his courſe.*

The Man of Pleaſure has his little clouds at the brighteſt, the courſe of his happineſs is retarded by a ſtraw; and any conſiderable, ſcarce conſiderable, accident puts it quite to death. Not only the neceſſaries, or conveniencies, but the decorations, and ſuperfluities of life, are *vital* to his ſickly felicity. In any of them he may receive a deep or deadly wound. Whereas they are mere excreſcences to the good man's happineſs; and he has no more feeling in them than in his hair, or his nail: Nay his happineſs is of ſo ſtrong a conſtitution, that it can ſtand *real* calamities unhurt. Nor quits its *ſerenity* on the confines of the grave; which the Man of Pleaſure but ill retains in the ſunſhine of life.

Of which ſtrange inferiority one cauſe is very obvious. When all our hopes and fears are confined within this narrow ſcene, what an inſupportable importance, what a tyranny over our paſſions, does this give it? what demi-gods does it make our ſuperiors, who can beſtow, what we *moſt* value? We tremble before them.

What

What mountains does it make of little things, becauſe the greateſt in *our* inventory? We turn pale, ſometimes die, at their loſs. But, the firſt moment we take God for our protector, and his precious promiſes for our chief portion, our ſuperiors, even kings, ſhrink to men; and crowns imperial loſe their luſtre. Little things *are* little, and leave our hearts at reſt. As a taper to the ſun; ſuch the ſun to the *glories that ſhall be revealed*. Looking to the cloſe of the drama, we reſume our native dignity; nor are longer over-awed on the ſtage, by our fellows; or, perhaps, our inferiors *behind* the ſcene. Nay, ſometimes, *on* it too. When, like poor *Altamont*, they are forced to change their plume for the warm cap of ſickneſs; and are unbuttoning their buſkins on the bed of anguiſh, terror, and death.

And muſt this, one day, be the caſe? after having run the gauntlet of diſappointing, painful, pleaſures, and, for ſome years, being afflicted with delights; to drop unregarded, unlamented, infamous, into puniſhment far greater, *for* the puniſhment they have already undergone.——Of human happineſs what a diſmal account is this? Yet this is the true. Let us, therefore enquire if it is not worſe than *they* deſerve.

Our *Men of Pleaſure* affect much being *Men of Honour* too; that is, they are as proud, as they are diſſolute: or, in other words, they will not ſtoop to mean and little vices; they deal only in great. They ſcorn to pick a pocket; but triumph in cutting a throat. If their *immaculate* honour is violated by word, look, or thought, then they trample all the laws of religion, juſtice, and humanity, without remorſe. My *enquiry* will join *The*

Man of Honour and *The Man of Pleasure* together. But how shall I enquire? How shall I know the heart of these men? And that only can inform me right. Let us then consider what these mens *prayer* would be, if they prayed at all. For what is a prayer, but addressing to some superior power, the real desires of our hearts?

Thus then I will shew you an exact picture of their hearts. There was so masterly a copy of a capital picture of *Julio Romano*, taken by one of his scholars, that he swore it was his own original drawing. I hope so to copy their hearts, that they shall imagine, that it is not I, but they themselves, that speak. The desires of their hearts, if cloathed in words, would run to the following purpose.—But, *first*, this caution: Let not that offend pious ears, which passes in an impious heart; and which, for the sake of *piety* (though, perhaps, not without some shock to it), is drawn out into light.

The PROFLIGATE'S PRAYER.

"O Thou! whose omnipotence is but a *second* attribute, an able servant to thy delight. Thou "great fountain of *Pleasure!* as *such* I adore thee. "Pleasure alone makes me devout; and let devotion "advance my Pleasure. For I am not more devout, "than modest; I ask not, yet, for heaven. Give me "my heaven on earth. Let *Mahomet*'s paradise descend, "and bless me on this side the grave. Let my *honour* "too shine before men; and let none see my heart,— "but Thee. *Noctem peccatis, & fraudibus objice nubem.* "Give my lusts a long and prosperous reign over me;

" and let not religion approach to hurt me. Lead me " into temptation, and give me ſtrength to comply with " it. And deliver me from all evil, that may mar my " delights. Let me be (as I have been) a brute while " I live, and an angel (if angels there are) when I " die."

Is the good man ſhocked at this? Yes; and the profligate too. Few know the foulneſs of their own hearts. A famous modern, when, in an age he had loſt his underſtanding, paſſing by a looking glaſs, cried out in compaſſion, " *Poor old Man!*" not knowing it to be himſelf. Thus the profligate, at ſight of this mirror, equally ignorant, no doubt will cry out in ſurprize, " *Horrid* " *wretch!*" I anſwer, therefore, to the queſtion above, *viz. Is it not worſe than* they *deſerve?* That *Men of Pleaſure*, themſelves being judges, deſerve the worſt.

In contraſt to *this* (and ſure it wants an antidote), accept that piece of devotion you deſired on your friend's account; and may it prove of ſome little ſervice to him!

Devout THOUGHTS of the Retired PENITENT.

" YES, bleſſed, ever bleſſed be the Divine Indul- " gence for *this*. How wanted, how welcome, " this aſylum? this receſs? Here earth holds its peace; " and heaven's voice can be heard. Heaven's voice, if " we liſten, ever ſpeaking in the human heart. Here " let me commune with my ſo-long-anxious heart; " which

" which has frequently called on me for an audience,
" and found me pre-engaged. Or elſe, the rude world
" broke in on our conference; and fatally puſhed it
" off till a farther day. Though (ſhocking to conſi-
" der!) though a depending eternity often chid my
" delay.

" While the noiſe of the world beats its drum in
" our ears; and its buſtle, and hurry, throws its duſt
" in our eyes; who can hear the ſoft whiſpers of con-
" ſcience, or read the ſtrong demands of reaſon, though
" written in capitals, on the compoſed and diſenchanted
" heart? I now read, hear, and tremble. I tremble at
" that, in which I once triumphed. I bluſh at that, of
" which I, once, was vain. Oh, *Pleaſure! Pleaſure!*
" what art thou? The death of reaſon. And with
" reaſon dies the whole heaven, as well as character,
" of man.

" The cloud now a little broken, which wrapped me
" up in night, look round, my ſoul enlarged; and ſay,
" where, or what am I? An immenſity around me! an
" eternity before me! a ſhadow, my Pleaſure! a mo-
" ment, my time! a vapour, my life! And ſhall a mo-
" ment, ſhade, vapour, engage all my love? engroſs
" all my thought? Shall it bid an angel from heaven
" wait my better leiſure? Bid the great Father of angels
" defer his call 'till to-morrow?—What, O my ſoul!
" if He ſhould call no more?—Good God! If He ſhould
" call no more? If He ſhould leave thee to thyſelf?—
" Where, then, is hope? Where, then, is man?

" Man, deſperate man, the firſt moment he ſets up
" for himſelf, and, impatient of controul, takes the

" rein into his own mad hands: the firſt moment he is " at liberty, he is the greateſt of ſlaves. How ſhackled! " how harraſs'd! how ſtarved! In the midſt of his ri- " ots, what a famine of joy? None can be wiſe for " time, that are fools for eternity. Dreadful indepen- " dence! the firſt moment man quits hold of his Cre- " ator, he drops! In diſtraction and ruin, how unfa- " thomed his fall!

" Out of that deep, I call unto Thee, O Lord! Lord, " hear my voice. Diſſolve the charm that ties me " down to delights trifling, terreſtrial, infernal; and " give me wings to riſe into day, and reach the things " that belong to my peace. Where is the creature, " which Thou haſt made? Where is the heart which " Thou haſt given? This ſink of pollution! this neſt " of all vices! it could not come from Thee. No, " I have ſnatched it out of thy bleſſed hand, and let " it fall in the mire. What is it to me, that *thy mercy* " *is over all thy works*, ſince I am *not* what Thou haſt " made?

" I have ſlept on a precipice, and dreamt I was in " heaven. Slept on its very brink; though vengeance " frowned over me, and flames roared beneath. What " horrors awake me! What a gulph lies before me! " What mercy has ſaved me! Where had I been, had " I died yeſterday? Oh, let this load, this mountain- " ous load, on my heart, ſink me lower, and lower " ſtill, in adoration that I live! Had I felt *theſe* pangs " before,—before I had been reclaimed.—Thou, that " beareſt up the pillars of the earth, ſupport my ſpirits! " —Where had I been, if yeſterday had been my laſt?

" Where

" Where—oh where?—And eternal too!—*Eternal!*—
" O Lord, God Almighty! could thy thunder ſhake
" me more?

" Thou glorious God, who makeſt the thunder! let
" me climb above creation; and ſoar into thoughts of
" Thee.—How I wander up and down, bewildered
" and benighted, through the *boundleſs* of ſuch a con-
" templation? Where, what, who, how, art Thou?
" Source of all Being! Centre of all Good! Great
" Antient of days! before the birth of time! beyond
" the comprehenſion of angels! Filler of Immenſity!
" who lookeſt down on the higheſt; and the loweſt
" doſt ſupport?—ſupport even me.

" Support me while I labour at ſome idea of my
" God——but I labour in vain. Thou moſt obvious,
" and moſt occult! moſt preſent, and moſt abſent of
" beings! how much of Thee is *enjoyed?* How little
" of Thee is *known?* I am *in* Thee, yet cannot find
" Thee. I can neither go from Thee, nor to Thee.
" Clouds, and thick darkneſs are thy pavilion! Won-
" ders paſſing wonders, through the moment of *time*,
" and the immenſe of *eternity*, guard, and aggrandize,
" thy tremendous throne!

" Before *ſuch* a Judge, O my ſoul! art thou to plead
" thy cauſe; to pour out thy deep ſorrows, and deeper
" ſins; to tremble out thy complaint? Oh! let me an-
" nihilate myſelf before Him. Nor *wretch*, nor *man*,
" nor *angel*, is any thing in His ſight, 'till he is nothing
" in his own. Who, Lord! ever thought on Thee, and
" was not confounded? And give me leave to add,
" Who, Lord! ever prayed to Thee (as he ought), and

" was not bleſſed? For which infinite mercy, from the
" firſt thrones in heaven, to the meaneſt worm on earth
" be payed all homage, praiſe, and adoration; conſtant,
" profound, ardent, and eternal!

PART II.

" Are they that pray, bleſſed?—But what is that to
" me? Dare I to pray? To whom is prayer addreſſed?
" Oh! how dreadful in majeſty! more dreadful in
" vengeance! dreadful to the bleſſed above! more
" dreadful to man! more ſtill to the ſinner! what then
" to the deepeſt in ſin? May not I then ſay (as is ſaid,
" Lord God Almighty, of thy bleſſed Self), *Hell is open*
" *before* me; *deſtruction hath no covering?* Where then
" ſhall I fly? I cannot fly from thy preſence. I dare
" not ſtand in it. Should I ſink to the centre, I am
" ſtill in thy ſight. Even darkneſs detects me! even
" flight brings me nigh! Oh! Thou that doſt light the
" ſun, as a taper; or tread it out, as a ſpark! Why *ſtill*
" in being, a wretch ever deſtined to pain? Oh! let
" me be nothing; or, let me be Thine.

" And what a nothing, indeed, am I? What a no-
" thing, compared, is man?—Thou that inhabiteſt
" eternity! my foundation is in the duſt. Lord moſt
" Holy! I was conceived in ſin. God moſt Mighty!
" what weaker than man? Great! Holy! Mighty!
" Three Perſons, and One God! Creator! Redeemer!
" Sanctifier! Three Benefactors, and One Being!
" with what indignation doſt Thou behold a wretch
" of ſuch complicated guilt? a ſinner to Thee, to the
" Public, and Himſelf?

" And

" And dare I then approach? The preſumption how
" great?—But greater to forbear. To ſin is bad: To
" deſpair is fatal. Oh! moſt merciful Jeſus! what
" refuge, but in Thee! Yet dare I not meet thy face:
" I come trembling behind Thee. If I touch but the
" hem of thy garment, I ſhall be whole. Even dogs
" may eat of the crumbs that fall from their maſter's
" table.—For that bountiful grant, what adoration is
" due? With proſtration profound I cannot but adore.
" —What adoration is equal? I cannot adore aright. Or
" could I! I am unworthy to lift an eye to thy throne.
" *My* incenſe has no odour; *my* anthem, no praiſe.

" But Thou, Lord, wide as the arch of heaven, doſt
" extend thy compaſſionate arms to receive a return-
" ing world. As the ſands of the ſea are thy mercies,
" and (with horror let me ſpeak it) *my* tranſgreſſions. I
" have looked on an unfeeling heart, as a quiet conſci-
" ence: On a multitude of ſinners, as an apology for
" ſin: And on the faſhion of the world, as a repeal of
" thy laws. I have been thankleſs, for what Thou
" haſt moſt bountifully given: Senſeleſs of what Thou
" haſt moſt bountifully promiſed: Provoking, under
" the greateſt obligations: Peeviſh, and impatient, un-
" der the ſmalleſt evils: Riotous under thy judgments:
" And by thy bleſſings, moſt unbleſſed: I turned them
" into poiſon; and by my proſperity was undone.

" I have ſtudied iniquity as a ſcience: Being vain of
" diſtinction in it; and aſhamed of my duty: I have
" bluſhed at the glance of a man, and a man moſt miſ-
" taken; and ſet my face as a flint againſt reaſon, and
" againſt Thee: I have even borrowed infidel ſcraps for
" the credit of the day; and run in debt for deſtruc-

" tion: Time given for repentance, I turned over to " folly; and made the Divine Mercy a promoter of ſin. " Nay, I have ſinned even beyond my power. What " ſchemes have I laid, which thy goodneſs diſappoint- " ed? How many crimes have I committed, which ne- " ver came to paſs?

" With ſuch overflowing of ungodlineſs I quenched " Thy bleſſed Spirit; I have trod, with thy Divine " Laws, thy precious blood, under foot. All this, " Lord! Thou knoweſt; and yet I ſtill live: All this, " Thou haſt ſeen; and yet haſt Thou held thy peace. " Thou haſt ſhortened thine arm; and curbed venge- " ance in air; though called for (if daring *can* call for " thy vengeance) to fall on my head.

" How long, Lord! haſt Thou forborne me? And " forborne when thine arrows went abroad: Though I " ſtood in the firſt rank of offenders; nor ever lifted " up the ſhield of devotion; quite naked in ſin. My " leſs vicious companions fell frequent around me; and " diſmal was their fall. I waſhed off its memory in " the next welcome debauch; and the juſt cauſe of re- " morſe but redoubled my guilt. By admonitions un- " admoniſhed, by thy mercies unſoftened, by my own " ſentiments unawed, by my own conviction uncon- " vinced, I cenſured their conduct, and trod on in their " ſteps. I deplored their ſad exit, and poſted on to my " own: Becauſe ſpared, when moſt obnoxious, I " thought myſelf immortal. In every path of Plea- " ſure, in every flight of ambition, what gay, ſanguine, " multitudes of thoſe born after me, and in every pro- " miſe of life to be placed before me, have I ſeen riſe,

" bloom,

" bloom, triumph, languiſh, decay, and die? What a " myſtery of mercy is this? And what a miracle of " madneſs am I? Amid this mighty field of ſlaughter " am I ſtill alive?—While I doubt if I ſtill live, I " live on in my crimes. Nay my very repentance in- " creaſes the number. Repentance ſo languid; ſo far " ſhort of my guilt!

PART III.

" Lord! from that ſtupendous height, towards which " the cherubims lift up an eye in vain, bow down thine " ear, and hear.—O Lord! hear me *not*. For what " have I to plead? what excuſe to cover, what palliation " to ſoften, my guilt? Can my confeſſion of ſin weigh " aught in my favour? I fear, not a grain; for where- " fore have I confeſſed my tranſgreſſions? becauſe I " could not conceal them. Thou knoweſt even thoſe, " that are unknown to myſelf. But then, Lord! I have " been tempted.—Yes, and I have courted temptation. " Frail nature has ſeduced me.—And have I not in- " dulged my ſeducer? Public example bore hard on " me.—And I rejoiced in that excuſe. I have ſinned " with my fathers.—True, but I have ſinned beyond " them. What age for indulgence has ſo looſened the " rein? And who, in ſuch an age, has ruſhed farther " in ill, than the wretch at thy feet?

" But is there nothing in counterbalance? no dawn- " ings of good? no pretenſions, at leaſt, to virtue, to " lighten the loaded ſcale? Yes; I have been an advo- " cate for virtue—That I might remove all obſtructions " in vice. I have gone to thy temple——But left my

" heart behind. Nay, I have prayed—But wiſhed not
" what I aſked. I have aimed at humility—Out of
" pride. I have given—But without charity. I have
" been kind, the very kindeſt of men—To gain power
" of being cruel, as the moſt malignant of foes. My
" devotion to Thee has been abſolutely declined; yet
" never have I repented, but of *omiſſions* in guilt: nor
" ever had a *darling* joy, but what is the parent of my
" *preſent* grief.

" On ſearching my own heart, that abyſs of cor-
" ruption, I find there is hardly a virtue which my
" hypocriſy has not worn, as a maſk; hardly a vice
" which my preſumption has not acted under it. By
" theſe abandoned means bringing into diſcredit virtue
" of others the moſt ſincere; and making more heinous
" my own deepeſt guilt: to the public a ſcarce leſs per-
" nicious peſt, than a fatal aſſaſſin to myſelf. Thus,
" Lord! all my pleas but inflame my indictment; and
" ſeeking excuſes, but diſcovers new crimes.

" But, as I diſcover new crimes in myſelf by my own
" awakened reflection; by the gift of thy Grace, I diſ-
" cover new goodneſs, new glories, new wonders, in
" Thee. I have lived in darkneſs, in the ſhadows of
" eternal death. I wrapped myſelf up in the world, I
" ſaw nothing; but what had been better unſeen, what
" made me blind to Thee. But now thy Divine attri-
" butes break in upon me, like the morning; and
" awake me to thy preſence. I ſee Thee in every thing.
" And ſeeing, I adore. And adoring tremble.

" Thine attributes, at once, all lighten upon me; and
" ſtrike me, like him of *Tarſus*, thy leſs perſecuting foe;

" they

" they ſtrike me to the duſt. Thy moſt aweful Omni-
" preſence; thy moſt incomprehenſible Glory; thy
" moſt unbounded Wiſdom; exquiſite Juſtice; and
" ineffable Goodneſs! Goodneſs, how ineffable! And
" to me, Lord! to *me* unſupportable. That chief
" cauſe of my confuſion! ſevere upbraider of my con-
" duct! and terrible aggravation of my guilt! If thy
" goodneſs thus pains me; what then will thy ven-
" geance? When thy vengeance awakes (cover me,
" O ye mountains!) When thy vengeance awakes—
" Oh! mercy! mercy! mercy!—Thou mighty to
" ſave! oh! have mercy upon me.

" And mercy thou wilt have, thou Father of all
" mercies! of mercy, redundant, inexhauſtible, ſource!
" Thou wilt not condemn him, who condemns him-
" ſelf. Who trembles at his own tribunal. Who is
" ſcarce ſtruck with more horror at vengeance, than at
" guilt. At *ſuch* guilt! and to *ſuch* a Maſter! whoſe
" bounties enabled me ſo ſignally to ſin; and who,
" my ſin ſo provoking, ſo long over-looked.

" But I repent. Lord! I repent—Yet how dry are
" theſe eyes? how hard is this heart? Strike thou the
" rock, and the waters flow. Let not him, who groans
" under his tranſgreſſions, groan under thy diſpleaſure.
" Thou Giver, Guider, Lover, yea, Buyer, of Souls!
" and, at what a price? Who doſt hear the very thoughts
" of the wounded at heart? Hear, pity, ſpare! Nor
" let the Lord be angry, if I preſume to add—Oh!
" ſpare thy paternal tenderneſs, oh ſave it from its
" averſion; its *ſtrange work*. Vengeance is an alien
" to thy moſt amiable nature. Ruin is a ſubverſion of
" thy moſt glorious ſcheme.

" Though common ſenſe has deſerted me; and a " *legion* poſſeſſed me; though I have contradicted my " own reaſon; and fought my own heart, which ſtood " in defence of thy laws; though I have ſtruggled hard " for madneſs; and taken ruin by force; yet let not " compaſſion be quite a ſtranger in heaven. Let not " thine anger burn for ever. Wherefore is the Lord " angry, becauſe I am a ſinner? What elſe canſt thou " forgive. Becauſe my ſin is great? If pardoned, the " greater the glory. Thy ſervant is wicked: but ſtill " a ſervant. Thy ſon a prodigal: but ſtill a ſon, " Though a ſon's duty has been wanting in me; loſe " not Thou, boundleſs love! *all* the bowels of a father. " Am not I the work of thy hand? Do not deſpiſe it. " An image of thy majeſty? Do not blot it out. The " price of thy blood? Oh! caſt it not away. Shall " things incompatible combine to my deſtruction? " Can I be related to ruin, and to Thee? Let it be thy " bleſſed pleaſure to reclaim, not to deſtroy me; if de- " ſtroyed, thy foe will triumph; if reclaimed, there is " joy in heaven; and ten times ten thouſand will ſing " praiſe round thy throne.

PART IV.

" But if I am pardoned, who then can be puniſhed? " What ſtains can condemn, if an *Æthiop* eſcapes? The " regions of darkneſs are part of thy creation; and hor- " rors infernal were not made in vain. My crimes, in " themſelves, how great? as committed in defiance of " *Infinite Majeſty*, they are greater ſtill. What then " ſhall I ſay? To what ſhadow of excuſe ſhall I fly? " —Pardon, Lord! the weakneſs of my reaſon, if I

" judge,

" judge, or, rather, hope, amiſs: Thine *Infinite Majeſty*,
" ſeems to plead *for* me. Fain would I find an advo-
" cate in *that*; in that very cauſe, which moſt heightens
" my guilt.

" For what, my Lord! am I? a poor complex of
" littleneſs and vanity; the very centre of infirmities;
" a combination of all cauſes, that can call for thy
" compaſſion. Frail fleſh, and fleeting ſpirit! a moth!
" a worm! a flower of the field! To-day, and not to-
" morrow! at morning, and not at night! not maſter
" of a moment; not a match for a breeze! A dream!
" a vapour! a ſhadow! a thing of nought! poſting
" through daily doubt and danger, toil and trouble,
" into trodden duſt and aſhes!

" Such am I! ſuch was I made!—and made by
" Thee: And now, Lord! wilt Thou make bare an
" arm Almighty againſt me? wilt Thou lift up a bolt
" that can cruſh creation, againſt its meaneſt worm?
" (oh! pardon what diſtreſs compels me to plead) thine
" *Infinite Majeſty* declares againſt it: that reſcues the ſin-
" ner, though it enhances the ſin. Does not my mean-
" neſs diſarm thy might? Is not the greatneſs of the of-
" fended, the offender's defence? I am, indeed, unwor-
" thy, moſt unworthy, thy favour: but am I not unwor-
" thy thy reſentment too? Thou that ſitteſt on the
" higheſt heavens, and ſeeſt worlds infinite dance be-
" neath thee, as atoms in the ſun!—Wilt Thou, oh!
" wilt Thou, not remember, that I am but duſt?

" Yes, Lord! Thou wilt remember it: Thou wilt
" remember thy glorious Self; what antient days re-

" ſound; what wonders Love Divine has wrought of
" old. For to whom do I cry? Art thou not He, to
" whom none ever cried in vain? Who created not, but
" to bleſs: commands not, but to preſerve; nor pu-
" niſhes, but to reclaim. Who has not more relieved,
" than amazed with his extremities of love! for art
" Thou not the ſame Lord, who, though moſt offended,
" as if Thou wert the offender, *beſeeches us* to be recon-
" ciled? Who mourns over the impenitent? and over
" the impenitent for ſins againſt Himſelf? And when
" his ſorrow can't prevail, even weeps in their ſtead?
" thoſe tears obdurate *Jeruſalem* would not ſhed, didſt
" Thou not take to thy own bleſſed lids, which over-
" flowed at the bare proſpect of its ruin? Who, with-
" out pious terror, without the greateſt aſtoniſhment,
" can think on theſe things? or, who, without com-
" fort, ſtill greater than *that?*

" Nor end our healing hopes of comfort here; not
" only to beſeech, commiſerate, and weep, deſcended
" the Lord of Glory, and Eternal Life, but to die. And
" *what* a death? And after *what* a life? A life of
" compaſſions, without number, and beyond meaſure:
" What a ſhining progreſs, what a ſtupendous aſcent in
" love? He meets the returning prodigal: looks com-
" paſſion on denying *Peter:* rejects not diſbelieving *Tho-*
" *mas:* admits ſinful *Magdalen:* pardons the taken adul-
" tereſs: and aſſociates to himſelf, in Paradiſe (where
" angels caſt their crowns at his feet), a thief from the
" croſs. What a marvellous and moſt adorable climax
" is this? And is it poſſible for love to riſe higher ſtill?
" Oh! let it riſe higher, and reach even me.

"What am I, Thou moſt exuberant Fountain of "Love! that I ſhould ſet a bound to ſuch compaſſion as "this? Can *ocean* be repelled by a ſingle grain on the "ſhore? What a triumph of mercy to pluck the ruin-"ed from ruin? What an *omnipotent* action to ſave the "moſt loſt? Though pleaſure has fooled me; though "reaſon, conſcience, heaven, nay and earth too, in "one ſcale, has been outweighed by a feather in the "other; though, with *Eſau*, I ſold my birthright for "nothing; yet, Lord! let theſe diſtractions of thought, "theſe convulſions of heart, theſe pangs of the wretch, "if not the prayer of the penitent, reach the foot of thy "throne: for His dear ſake who ſpared not his moſt "precious blood; oh! ſpare, pardon, bleſs; yes, bleſs "me, even me, O my *Father!* Yes, Thou all-ſur-"rounding, all-pervading, all-ſuſtaining, and all-"bleſſing Majeſty of heaven! bleſs me, even me, "O my *God!*

"*Thou!* who if thou moveſt thy lip it thunders: if "thou lifteſt thine eye, the ſun is dark: who haſt thy "way in the whirlwind; and walkeſt on the wings of "the wind: who ſitteſt above the heavens, and hideſt "thy footſteps in the great deep! But (above all,) whoſe "ſuperabundant effluence, whoſe ocean of love, over-"flows the whole creation! add to theſe wonders one "wonder more — the forgiveneſs of guilt like mine: "hear the ſuppliant voice, ſee the bleeding bo-"ſom, theſe throes, theſe throbs of the moſt vile "and abandoned—but moſt repentant, and heart-"broken, of men.

"*Then*,

" *Then*, Lord! come the worſt, I will not complain.
" My joy ſhall burſt its way through the frowns of the
" world; and the ſhadows of death. Then—*Bleſſings*,
" *and honour, and glory, and power be to Him who ſitteth*
" *on the throne, and to the lamb*, who nails ſin to his
" croſs!—Thus will I ſing in ſpite of my groans!
" Thus will I ſing with my laſt expiring breath!
" Thus will I ſing for ever, and ever.

" Amen. O my ſoul! Amen, Amen."

This, Sir, is that importunate, ardent, perſevering, ſpirit of addreſs, which was ſuitable to the ſtate of the perſon from whom I borrowed it. It may poſſibly (partly at leaſt) ſuit ſome others. And I thought it inhuman to gaze, ſo long as I have done, on the diſeaſe, without aiming at ſome expedient to mitigate its malignity. There is a ſovereign balm in prayer.

I know, Sir, there are certain quietiſts in devotion, ſaints of great repoſe in prayer, who may cenſure this, as too warm. But, when ſhould we be warm, if not when our eternity is at ſtake? Shall we be warm in our vices? and cool in our repentance? Were our paſſions given for nothing? or given only as the ſervants of ſin? Is it not heaven, but its reverſe, that is to be taken by violence? I, therefore, drop this diſpute, not only as *unchriſtian*, but *undeiſtical* too: for, if there is a God, all our affections are too feeble, all the wings of our ſoul are too few, to be put forth in purſuit of his favour; and being languid in devotion, is, being ſolemnly undevout. If there is a God, he gave us our paſſions,

as

as well as our reaſon; they therefore, as well as reaſon, ſhould aſſiſt in his ſervice. And, indeed, reaſon without them, though it may loudly tell, will but lamely perform, our duty. How great a part of the ſcripture muſt theſe men's kind of criticiſm explode? Poor *David* muſt break his harp, leſt it give offence. Even angels have their paſſions, nor are any beings exempt from the *need* of them on this ſide the throne of God. Whatever exemption ſome may fancy in their own favour, let us, my friend, who have ſeen the neceſſity of devotion for others, not neglect our own. Nor, in the pride of inſtructing, loſe the prudence of ſafety.

You and I, my friend! lie under two diſadvantages in this point: the world's example, and our own years. It is an undevout age: and will you not be ſurprized to hear me ſay, that ours is an undevout period of life?—Yet it is moſt certain, that there is a tenderneſs of heart, and a ſuſceptibility of awe, with regard to God, as well as man, in youth, which, in moſt, is wanting afterwards. This want is an enemy we muſt fight, and fervent prayer, that *ſword of the ſpirit*, is the beſt weapon againſt him. Prayer, becauſe the moſt eaſy of duties, ſeems, with many, the hardeſt to be performed. It coſts them ſo little pains, they think they may as well let it alone. Whereas, it is the ſupreme, the great, mother-duty; all other duties, and virtues, are its progeny; are brought forth, nurſed, nouriſhed, and ſuſtained by it. Devotion is the ſole aſylum of human frailty, and ſole ſupport of heavenly perfection: it is the golden chain of union between heaven and earth; keeps open the bleſſed communication;

—*Geni-*

—*Geminique facit commercia regni.* CLAUD.

He that has never prayed, can never *conceive*, and he that has prayed as he ought, can never *forget*, how much is to be gained by prayer.

Dear Sir,

Yours.

LETTER

LETTER V.

LIFE's REVIEW.

The GENERAL CAUSE of SECURITY in SIN.

THOUGHTS for AGE.

LETTER V.

LIFE's REVIEW.

DEAR SIR,

IN this and the following letters I ſhall touch on five points: *Life's Review: The General Cauſe of Security in Sin: Thoughts for Age: The Dignity of Man: The Centaur's Reſtoration to Humanity.* The three firſt are naturally ſuggeſted to me, by the world's wickedneſs, and our own; and our advanced time of life. The fourth, *viz. The Dignity of Man,* is naturally ſuggeſted by the notoriety of its reverſe in thoſe, for whoſe ſake theſe letters are principally written. For who can look on *Lucifer* in his abyſs, without thinking of that height from which he fell? By which alone we can take any juſt meaſure of his calamity. And the fifth point, *viz. The Centaur's Reſtoration to Humanity,* is forcibly impoſed on me by the tranſporting thought, that *ſuch* an event is poſſible. Yet, ſhould it take place, poſterity will ſcarce believe it:

Annalium noſtrorum laboravit fides. L. FLO.

I be-

I begin with *The Review of Life*; and that, though chiefly for our own ſakes, yet alſo for the ſake of all our grey-headed boys, as *Sudbury*, *Torriſmond*, *Ironſide*, &c. for though beaſts of ſo groſs a claſs as they chooſe to rank with, ſcarce deſerve to be brought to the manege, yet pupils not yet expelled the ſchool of life, ought ſtill, if poſſible, to be taught the leſſon they have ſo long neglected; and I offer myſelf gladly for their tutor; tho' I fear they would prefer a *tetanothrum* * to an *apotheoſis*: Their erudition will not leave them at a loſs to know what I mean.

There is nothing of which men are more liberal than their good advice, be their ſtock of it ever ſo ſmall; becauſe it ſeems to carry in it an intimation of our own influence, importance, or worth. We (for you approved it; *we*, I ſay), have beſtowed abundance of it on our Centaurs, which, I fear, will bring us in but little thanks. Let us, therefore, return from abroad, come to ourſelves; and ſee if our export of wiſdom may not be wanted at home. We have cenſured the aged; are we not ſuch ourſelves? Is there no folly to be found, but at aſſemblies and maſquerades? Or is folly not folly, becauſe it hits our own taſte? Let us lay the line to our own conduct: Let us drop foreign ware, and put ourſelves into the ſcale.

Yes, my friend! let us make a ſhort viſit to our former ſelves. They are, indeed, great ſtrangers; nor much to be liked: Yet it is a viſit all ſhould make who wiſh well to the future of life. *A Review of Life* is an employment agreeable but to few; becauſe none *can* look

* A medicine to take out wrinkles.

back

back without ſelf-condemnation; and none *will* look forward but with ſelf-flattery. But though the taſk may be bitter, it is wholſome too. Aſk you, "What "advantage from it?"—It is the only way of taking my Centaur's † advice, and *knowing ourſelves*. A man can ſee himſelf in retroſpection only. When warm in action, he is ever looking on ſomething elſe; on his point in view: Or, if he could ſee himſelf, he could not judge aright, either of himſelf, or others. While warm in action, prejudices, and paſſions, excited by the *then* preſent objects, and incidents, corrupt his judgment. But in a cool review, he becomes rather a *byſtander*, than the *party*; and is patient of truth. His *then* former rivals are no longer rivals; therefore he judges better of *men*. His former points of view are no longer points of view; therefore he judges better of *things*. He can judge, nay he cannot but judge, as impartially of himſelf, as of the reſt of mankind.

Wiſdom is the growth of experience: But experience is not the growth of action, but of reflection on it. In an active life is *ſown* the ſeed of wiſdom; but he, who reflects not, never *reaps*; has no harveſt from it; but carries the burden of age, without the wages of experience; nor knows himſelf old, but from his infirmities, the pariſh regiſter, and the contempt of mankind. And what has age, if it has not eſteem?—It has nothing.

Starting, my friend! from the ſame goal, thro' different paths, which ſevered our fortune, not our affection, we have run our race; and now approach its end. Jaded with our long journey, the ſpur of ambition

† In the frontiſpiece,

blunted,

blunted, and our ſpirits off their ſpeed, we are glad of reſt. In which, reflection on the paſt is not only *uſeful*, but extremely *natural*. Look on the ſtormy ſea, whoſe billows reach the clouds; then on the peaceful lake, where the feather, or fallen leaf, lies unmoved; and you ſee the difference between the cool evening, and warm meridian of man. Reflection is as natural to one, as action to the other. Unactive youth, and unreflecting age, are equal blanks in the book of life. Man varies no leſs than thoſe varying inſects at which he wonders. In his morning he crawls: long ere noon, flutters, and flies; at evening, chilled into langour, he creeps into corners, lies hid, and ſleeps; or, if awake, having but little ground before him, nor that the beſt: How naturally he looks back on the paſt? How naturally his winter's evening calls for its tale? And to ſelf-love, what tale ſo natural as our own? How idle ſoever our *tale* has been, if we can draw ſome *moral* from it, that will abate its inſignificance, and give it ſome little weight by making us wiſer for the future.

And want we not to be wiſer? On how many fruitleſs friendſhips, ill-judged enmities, raſh preſumptions, cowardly deſpairs, unmanly flatteries, bold indecencies, idle ſchemes, airy hopes, groundleſs fears, opportunities loſt, admonitions ſlighted, eſcapes unacknowleged, evils improved, bleſſings neglected, and trifles admired; on what a ſwarm of infirmities I look back with ſhame? How ambitious have we been in our attachments, not aware that all, moſt worth our ambition, we can give ourſelves? How fearful of expences, not aware, that, till it eſcapes the gripe, and takes its flight into ſome prudent uſe, money is not *wealth*; that it truly becomes

ours

ours only by our parting with it? How fond have we been of applauſe, not aware that human, ſeparate from ſuperior, applauſe, is the greateſt vanity, as well as the moſt common purſuit, in life? How plainly I now ſee, that few things are more pernicious than too keen an appetite for applauſe, except a bold defiance of juſt reproach? *That* makes coxcombs; *this*, felons; this calls for deteſtation; that, for contempt.

How plainly do I now ſee, that our ignorance has been great? How often have we been ſo idle as to complain of our wants; that is, of our capacity of being happy? For, without wants, there would be no deſires, and, without deſires, no gratification of them; and, without gratification of deſire, no happineſs; for *human* happineſs, nay happineſs of all created beings, conſiſts in nothing elſe.

What on retroſpect appears to me to be the capital weakneſs of man, is, that ſtrange aſcendant which his wiſhes have over his underſtanding: It is this makes a *Centaur*. How often have we looked on our wiſhes as infallible arguments for the certainty of what we deſired; when others ſaw it was an impoſſible point? And of this capital weakneſs, a capital inſtance is, that dying men can ſcarce believe that they ſhall die. Are we not now as thoſe yellow autumn leaves, which the firſt blaſt ſweeps away? Yet we ſeem to think the green bud hardly more tenacious of the ſtem.

On farther review, *this* is ſtranger ſtill: Our friends are our ſtrongeſt ties to life: When theſe are cut, what but folly can renew the charm? What re-engage our

diſenchanted hearts? And what, in my retroſpect, is an object more obvious, or ſtriking, than yonder enſigns of death? How the tyrant triumphs? What numerous monuments riſe over the cold boſoms that once warmly received us? That ſhared our councils, our ambitions, our pleaſures, and our hearts? Their epitaphs collected would make a volume: A volume how inſtructive, if read aright? A friend's monument is a friend's legacy; and a richer to the conſiderate, than any parchment can convey. What, for the moſt part, is human wiſdom, but the melancholy growth of a bleeding heart? The thought of death is the directing helm of life, and he beſpeaks a wreck, who lays it aſide.

O my friend! how rapid the human march? Men are in haſte; how they hurry over the ſtage? Where are thoſe luminaries in every various walk of fame, in every kind of excellence, and renown, who moſt fired our ambition, and provoked our envy? Are they not paſſed away as *April* ſhadows over the field; or, by the fire ſide, a winter's tale? Are not thoſe far-ſeen, ſhining lights gone out apace after one another, as little ſparks in the fired leaf, or paper, leaving us nothing but aſhes behind? And in their aſhes is there nothing to be found but ſorrow? May we not light on a little prudence in them?

Sorrow, indeed, predominates. Oh, recent wound! Sorrow how juſt? Whom loſt we the very laſt moon? —Loſt *we?* That is vainly ſad: Whom loſt the public? Whom the whole nation? Few have left it more worthy all love, and eſteem, than our friend deceaſed †.

† Sir J. S.

He was made by nature to be beloved; and intitled by virtue to be admired.

——— *Quem ſemper amatum,*
Semper honoratum, ſic Dii voluiſtis, habebo. VIRG.

Well had it been, if we, like him, had ſought *eſteem*; but we would not pay the price. *Love* we thought would come cheaper; and ſeeking that, were in danger of loſing both. The wiſe world will part with nothing, but by force. Love cannot be compelled, eſteem may. And, when it is, we lay in it, at the ſame time, the ſureſt foundation for laſting love.

My retroſpect ſhews me a *tranſitory* love of which we have been too fond. A love often beſtowed by great ones, on thoſe whom they cannot eſteem. This love, ſuppoſing it ſterling, I *(ſtultus ego!)* returned in kind: But I do not repent it. I may not repent of my virtue: For, my friend! there are two ſorts of charity in the world, and which the greateſt, is hard to ſay. We are bound in compaſſion to help the poor to *live*, and the rich to *enjoy*; who feel a pain peculiar to themſelves, that of being mocked by abundance, which denies them their expected happineſs; happineſs in proportion to their purſe. All I learn from ſuch *ardent* lovers (for ſuch generally they are) is, that it is dangerous to dip into moſt men below the ſurface, leſt our curioſity ſhould rob us of our good opinion of them. Much decorum, little homage, is requiſite. My whole life tells me, that a juſt demand for *eſteem* is ſacred, but rare. We may well afford to pay it, when it is *due:* Nor muſt our *love* be with-held, where it is *not*. Univerſal love

enjoined, is deſigned as an antidote againſt reciprocal contempt; and as a diſcipline to human pride, which muſt ſtoop to love men in their infirmities and *faults*: Nor is it more our duty, than our prudence; how elſe could we hope quarter for our *own*; which both tell us of others faults, and bid us forgive them. For many of them we ſhould not ſuſpect, but from the whiſpers of their parallels in our own boſoms. And therefore, by not forgiving them, we condemn ourſelves. If, then, we would be forgiven by ourſelves, or others, we muſt forgive. A truth for which I thank my preſent Review.

What I like leaſt in this ſurvey, for fear it ſhould prove our own caſe, is *this*; I find old men apt to think well of themſelves, not becauſe they fly vice, but becauſe vice is fled; repute themſelves virtuous, becauſe free from boys offences; ſet down impotence for victory; and triumph, becauſe they have not fought, becauſe they meet no foe. And what makes me even tremble, is, I ſee ſome, who, blameleſs in youth, are overtaken by folly when in years, and (of all ſights the moſt deplorable!) I ſee them dragged by their white beards into the fouleſt enormities. Faults which are the natural growth of the diſtinct periods of life, may meet with ſome toleration: But the monſtrous growth of vices out of ſeaſon no man ſpares: Becauſe the hot-beds of *Lucifer* only can raiſe crimes, in which *nature* has no hand.

Heaven avert from us ſuch an end! for, far from blameleſs was our beginning. In our early days (called the days of innocence), we had our little villanies; our

vice

vice in miniature: As years and temptations increaſed in years leſs ripe, than in iniquity, we were no petty criminals, before we were men. We wiſhed, indeed, for wiſdom; but what wiſdom would have avoided, we made our favourite choice; what wiſdom would have choſen, we bid wait till to-morrow. Frequent were our quarrels with our faults; but rarely puſhed on to a parting. Pleaſure had its charms, and virtue its efforts; and ſometimes, in a paſſion, threw its rider. But triumphs of paſſion are but ſhort. No rebukes are ſo powerful as thoſe from our own conduct. Affords not this, then, a ſtrong caution for the future? The diſtempers of the paſt periods of our lives are the beſt antidotes for thoſe to come.

Retroſpection informs me, It was, *now*, open war with our enemy; *now*, perfect peace: How eaſy ſin ſat on our hearts; and called itſelf ſpirit, wiſdom, any thing but what it was? When ſome merciful diſcipline awaked us from our trance, we fought; and we conquered: But what was our conqueſt? Such as rather marred our wrong enjoyments, than wedded us cloſely to the right. We *called* the right our beloved, our ſpouſe; but often committed adultery againſt it; thus loſing the joys both of the ſinner, and the ſaint: So motley a creature is man; as mutable as God is fixed. Ours, indeed, was no uncommon caſe: But others faults are not our abſolution. An abſolution it is, however, with which many are content: Tho' his Holineſs could ſcarce give his ſaints one more ineffectual and vain.

Who is he, my dear friend, that can abſolve us, or condemn?——Look through thy whole paſt life, an

anſwer. What year, nay, what day, has paſſed unimpowered to vouch for *his* clement, and abſolute reign! See I not, in numberleſs inſtances, the naked hand of Providence ſtretched out, as it were, on this ſide the clouds, pointing us to good? Now, ſhewing how little this world can give, by pouring on us the full enjoyment of it; to turn our hearts on a better. Now, ſhewing us, by the calamities of others, how much we may ſuffer in this world; to keep us in awe, though ourſelves were unhurt. Now, breaking to pieces all our own ſchemes, and raiſing our happineſs out of their ruins; to teach us humility, gratitude, and on whom to rely; ſhewing us, that moſt of our triumphs are errors; and our diſappointments, eſcapes. Now bringing us, when moſt ſecure, to the brink of the grave; to repreſs preſumption. Now ſnatching us from it, when paſt all human help; to kindle devotion, and forbid the pain of deſpair. Now defeating us in ſpite of all our wiſdom; now bleſſing us in ſpite of all our folly: bleſſing, to ſweeten life; the contrary, to wean us from it; and thus in both worlds to provide for our welfare, as far as the nature of humanity will admit.

What a glorious image of Divine goodneſs is this? The wiſeſt cannot pay half its due in their higheſt opinion, nor the beſt in their profoundeſt acknowlegement, of it. And can we not ſhew as inglorious a portrait of human *weakneſs* in ourſelves? How are our two different paths of life equally ſtrewed over with follies? with follies thick as autumn leaves! but not thick enough to hide our faults: So numerous both, that I am quite diſinclined to look longer backward; and haſten, for refuge,

refuge, into ſome change of thought. And here, ſhall only add, that man overlooks the moſt inſtructive book in his ſtudy, if he reads not himſelf.

And now, I fear, you will ſay, that how *uſeful*, and *natural*, ſoever Life's Review may be, yet you can find but little pleaſure in it. In it there is no pleaſure to be found, but what has coſt us ſome pain; but what we have fought our way to, thro' nature's perverſe byaſs, and beſieging temptations. Unbought pleaſure is not the growth of earth: This is a militant ſtate; nor muſt man unbuckle his armour, till he puts on his ſhroud: For the moſt victorious veteran may meet with a defeat. Nothing in Life's Review can give delight, but what we may call our trophies, or ſpoils taken in war. All elſe is vaniſhed as a dream.

What have I ſaid? vaniſhed as a dream!—Would to God it was! 'tis *not!* Far from it! Every moment is immortal! Every moment ſhall return, and lay its whole freight, nothing loſt, its every whiſper, every thought, before the Throne: The Throne of him who ſent it to man on that commiſſion; and commands it back, at the ſtated day, to make its report; to be regiſtered in eternity, for the peruſal of angels, and the juſtification of their King. Tell our gay triflers, that there is no ſuch thing as a trifle upon earth. Can any thing be a trifle, that has an effect eternal? Tell them, tho' they are ſo well aſſured, that there is nothing ſerious upon earth, that *time*, to man, is, in ſome reſpects, a more ſerious ſeaſon than eternity: That *his* eternity is abſolutely the creature of time: That 'tis foul, or fair, rejoices, or laments, as time, *omnipotent* time! (that trifle

which they throw away) ordains its fate. If they doubt it, let them aſk their jovial companion, who died of *their* happineſs laſt night.

Many, my friend! have made a worſe, many a better, uſe of time than we have done. Many have been more criminal; many more innocent. But moſt men imagine that innocent, which has a *negative* guilt. An idle day is a guilty day, in a life ſo ſhort and precarious; with more than human thought can carry, incumbent on it. There are not more ſpots in the ſun than in the life of a ſaint.

What then are we?—O my friend! at half a glance through life, I perceive, that, though we have made a ſhift to creep out of the *Augean ſtable*, yet have we not ſcaled the temple of virtue: though we made the choice of *Hercules*, yet we wanted his ſtrength: though we, ſometimes, lopped one head of the *Hydra*; yet, too often, ſeven ſhot up in its ſtead. Whereas, on the contrary, they that have been long toſſed by folly, when once landed on a good life, ſhould *burn their ſhips*; as *Cæſar* once burnt thoſe of his legions on the *Britiſh* coaſt: I mean, that the warmeſt reſolution ſhould deſtroy the very deſire of embarking in ill; and ſo render a return impracticable.

Such, then, being our feeble attempts, ſo ſlender our pretence to wiſdom, it becomes us to give thoſe, whom we have ſo freely treated, their revenge. To confeſs, that, though we are not quite *horizontals*, yet neither are we quite *upright*; and, though we have ſet up for reformers, yet we are not, altogether, men.

A *man*,

A *man*, my friend! is a glorious being; a great rarity; there are but few to be found. A *man* is an exalted character, doubly great; he is an hero, and a king. Few kings are so great, as to reign over their own hearts. Few heroes so victorious, as to drive *dominions*, *principalities*, and *powers*, before them. Both these meet in a *real man*: He ranks, in *reality*, but a little lower than the angels: nor long, so low.——O friend! man is a wonderful being! Anon, I will tell thee what thou art; and (mark what I say), I will surprize thee with thyself.

At present, only this.—Dare we say, that we are arrived at the character I have mentioned? No. Dare we say, it was not in our power? No.—Why then this cowardice in a *possible* hero? Why this disloyalty to himself, in a *possible* king? Whence this reproach to reason, and immortality? Whence this inglorious, and absolute desertion from our godlike selves? Sounds that too high?—In whose image were we made? I foresee your objection; I grant that image is impaired: but I quit not my point; I dare affirm, that beings which are free, rational, and immortal, may be gods in due time, through Divine Grace, if they please.

How deplorable our distance from it? Whence this *unmanly* defect? Know we not that, unless our conduct is that of a man, it had been better for us, if in a lower species had fallen our lot? Why were we called into being? What we have enjoyed already poorly pays our mothers pain, and our own. Wouldst thou repeat thy part in the comedy? act it o'er again? Wouldst thou be rejumbled in this rough *Thespian* cart, dragged on by

thoſe two ſkeletons, half-ſtarv'd *hope*, and panting *expectation*, through bad roads, *now* worſe and worſe, and thy fellow-ſtrollers in a conſtant conſpiracy againſt both thy pay, and thy applauſe; how well ſoever thy part is performed; how great ſoever thy indulgence is to them?—Thou wouldſt not. Here and there, indeed, we might pick up a lucky hour, *alboque notanda lapillo*, that might make us ſmile again. But nature, and indeed reaſon, ſtarts back at the whole. If we ſhould find a ſmall pearl in one oyſter of a million, it would hardly make us fiſhers for life.

Wouldſt thou, then, ceaſe to be?—No, nature ſhudders at it. That horn of the alternative wounds more than the former: If ſo, our wiſhes, as well as our nature, puſh us into eternity. And ſhall we *fear*, what we *wiſh*? Fear it we muſt, unleſs we provide a good reception there. We have provided for to-morrow, and to-morrow was not ſatisfied. If we provide for eternity, our ſatisfaction will be full. We have provided for many years; for more than we ſhall ever ſee; but not for thoſe which will never end.

How great the diſhonour, my dear fellow-criminal! in us, who were not blind to the grand futurity, were not cold to the divine rewards; to let the glowing thoughts of immortality ſo far mingle with the dregs of ſenſe? Is not this, with the wings of an eagle, to drop into the mire? *There* lies the *pleaſure* of which the world is ſo fond; that bane of private property, that preſage of public ſlavery, that ſure annihilation of a rational creature, and as ſure a creation of a wretch eternal. *Pleaſure* has robbed earth of more lives, and heaven of more

more ſouls, than the body collective of all other evils diſcharging their whole quivers on man.

Our weakneſs, and our ſecurity under the conſequences of it, is no uncommon caſe. Bluſhing I look round for its fatal cauſe. And do I not find it, where, if found, it muſt increaſe my confuſion? Do I not find it in the *great goodneſs* of God? If ſo, how muſt that reproach and brand the deep ingratitude of man? And, I think, I find it there.

The GENERAL CAUSE of SECURITY in SIN.

FOR, conſider, my good friend! what can he do that ventures to continue in ſin? He cannot defy the wrath Divine; that is not in man. He cannot acquieſce under the terror of its conſequence; he muſt therefore preſume on Divine mercy. "I know myſelf "worthleſs, yet earth pours its bleſſings. I know my-"ſelf worthleſs, yet heaven buys me with its blood. "What is to be feared, what is not to be hoped, from "*ſuch* a God? Be my crimes what they will, ſome yet "unrevealed expedient will be found for my ſafety. "For *God is Love*." Thus, poſſibly, he may reaſon: and thus, at once, do two ſtrange things: cite Scripture to his ruin, and make the mercies of God fatal to man.

God, indeed, is love: but ſhall man therefore be a monſter? And a monſter in the judgment of all men? All confeſs that there is an admirable conſent between the precepts of virtue, and the ſentiments of our common reaſon. All confeſs, that virtue receives a con-

ſtant approbation from the uniform verdict of our conſciences. All confeſs, that virtue practiſed brings in the greateſt happineſs to ſociety: He, therefore, that is not virtuous, can give himſelf no ſatisfactory account why he was born either with reaſon, or conſcience, or a deſire of happineſs: ſince he has nothing of what they all demand from him. And, therefore, he muſt appear an unaccountable being; that is a monſter, not only to others but himſelf.

This is more than enough to make vice our averſion, though God were love to that abſurd degree, which our folly may fancy, and which our vice moſt certainly wiſhes, and wants. But there is no *ſuch* love in Him: It is blaſphemous to ſuppoſe it. God *is* love, and therefore—what? That which many may leaſt expect—— therefore God is *terrible*: From whence ariſes his marvellous love to man? Of man He has no need; the Divine happineſs is complete: in man He ſees no merit; He knows we are worthleſs, as well as we ourſelves; But then, far better than we, He knows that we are—*immortal*. That therefore (moſt intereſting, and moſt alarming thought!) that therefore, we *muſt* ſuffer, or enjoy, for ever!

Hence, be moſt aſſured, my friend! his regard for man. Hence, for a worm, to-day crawling out of the earth; and to-morrow, more deſpicably ſtill, crawling into corruption; his compaſſion, his ſolicitude, his councils held on high; and all the wonders of his love. Wonders?—much more than wonders to man; they are wonders in heaven! They ſtrike with amazement the firſt angels of light.

Con-

Conſcious of thy own meanneſs, canſt thou ſcarce believe that Divine indulgence ſhould thus abound? Conſider: God, indeed, called us out of the *duſt*. But He called us into an *eternity*: An eternity, henceforward, commenſurate with his own: And ſhall not his concern be commenſurate in degree, bear a proportion to his gift? Shall not one ſhew as much of the Great God as the other? As he has made us *immortal*; He has made us alſo *endangered*, creatures. Creatures that muſt, neceſſarily, ſtand the moſt important, and incomprehenſible conſequence of their own doubtful conduct for ever. Does not this abate thy ſurprize at ſuch abundant indulgence? It muſt, if *God is love*, and vouchſafes to look on us in the mentioned light. In that light He looks on us. Thence his more than paternal bowels of compaſſion for the moſt unworthy of men. Thence his omnipotence exerted in giving proofs of his love.

But why, ſayeſt thou, is this love *terrible?* Is not that love *moſt* terrible which tells us we are in danger of being eternally undone? And *this* love tells us ſo; for (as I conceive) it never had exiſted, had not that been our caſe.

How deep then, and deplorable, is their miſtake, who preſume to ſin, becauſe God is ſo good; when God is ſo good purely becauſe he knows that preſumption will be their ruin? Who preſume on impunity for ſin, becauſe God is ſo good; when God is ſo good, purely becauſe He knows that ſin, and impunity, are incompatible? Such men make a demonſtration of their danger, the baſis of their ſecurity; and fear nothing, becauſe an Omnipotence, that is ſollicitous for their welfare,

fare, gives proof that He is apprehenſive of their deſtruction.

Such men reaſon ill. Still worſe, experience cannot convince them. What their experience of every day, every hour, proves to be true, they will not believe: They *doubt*, if they ſhall be (not to uſe a harſher word) condemned for their ſins. Yet they *know* that they ſhall die. Now, as I take it, their death is a prelude, and aſſurance, of their future condemnation: for, if beings, originally immortal, die for another's ſin, can it be doubted, but that they ſhall be condemned for their own? And that death (which is a demonſtration that ſin ſhall not eſcape unpuniſhed) is unavoidable, they are convinced by their *ſenſes*: Unleſs our Centaurs, therefore, lay aſide their ſenſes, as well as their reaſon, for the future they muſt forego vain hopes, too frequent, and too ſanguine, among them: nor longer turn a proof of immortality into a preſumption on impunity; Heaven's indulgence, into deſtruction; and gather poiſon from the tree of life.

I know not, my friend! if others have urged theſe arguments, with regard to the cauſe of God's great indulgence to man, and the certainty of puniſhment for ſin; but to me they appear of a very weighty and affecting nature. There are ſome truths of the laſt moment to men, which, at firſt aſpect, have ſomewhat ſurpriſing in them: they require, and well deſerve, our ſecond thoughts.

I will give you two; one from Scripture; one from my own thoughts: "*With the Lord there is mercy*, there-

"fore

" fore *ſhall He be feared.—With man there is immortality*, therefore *ſhall He tremble.*—Tremble at himſelf! Tremble at his own power, which can give what colour he will to a whole eternity. Tremble at his own glory; that he has angels for his guard; and an Almighty for his friend. Yes, tremble at all that might incline him to triumph: for theſe grandeurs, that inſpire preſumption, increaſe danger: are magnificent aſſurances that he may be plunged beyond hope; be loſt paſt retrieve.

God, indeed, forbids our deſpair: but not becauſe his love will ſave us in our ſins; but becauſe deſpair ſtops all effort at amendment; and without it his love deſires our welfare in vain. His love is ſuch, as to give us encouragement, and ſupport, in every thing, but ſin: ſuch as to ſupport our ſpirits amid the ruins of a falling world; but not under the cloud of one unrepented guilt.

This flings light on a part of Scripture, which has a cloud on it in ſome eyes; and with others quite ruins its credit: *Work out your ſalvation with fear, and trembling:* A ſtrange text to thoſe, who fear and tremble at nothing ſo much as at a diſappointment in their luſts. Our ſalvation muſt be *worked out:* Wiſhing, and willing, will not bring it; hoping, and confiding, will not procure it; it will not come by chance; no, nor by gift, and infuſion. It muſt be worked out with *fear*; becauſe fear is the ſtrongeſt guard of diligence, without which, this work cannot go on; and with *trembling*, leſt we ſhould fail in this important work; leſt we ſhould think too lightly of the Divine juſtice; and leſt our very confidence ſhould betray us, even though we were good men:

men: for good men have failed purely from a good opinion of their own ſtate. For a good opinion begets ſecurity; ſecurity begets negligence; and negligence temptation; and temptation, a fall: and (if unrepented) a fall into that ſtate, where our *firſt* wiſh will be, that we never had been born; and (worſe ſtill!) where there is no *laſt*. Pain is ſometimes ſo great even *here*, that we loſe our ſenſes; *there* it will be far greater; and (how terrible to ſay!) our ſenſes will *not* be loſt.

THOUGHTS for AGE.

ON the bank of that ſtate we, *now*, ſtand: That poſt of wiſdom, if ever men are wiſe; which is the reaſon why they wiſh it may be long before they arrive at it: for folly is the favourite of mankind: And is it not *our own?* Though there we ſtand, we ſcarce believe it; ſo much our wiſhes obſtruct our beliefe: or, believing, ſcarce know what being *there* means; ſo much familiarity takes away our attention; and robs things of their power to ſtrike ſtrong on our minds. *Eternity* has ſo often paſſed our lips, that it has forgot its way to our hearts. Did it enter there, would it not extinguiſh every earth-born paſſion in them? Yes; as the ſun, the ſmalleſt ſpark of fire.

Though we ſtand on its awful brink, ſuch our leaden byaſs to the world, we turn our faces the wrong way; we are ſtill looking on our old acquaintance, *time*; tho' *now*, ſo waſted and reduced, that we can ſee little more of him than his *wings* and his *ſcythe*: our age enlarges his wings to our imagination; and our fear of death,

his

his ſcythe; as *time* himſelf grows leſs. His conſumption is deep: his annihilation is at hand.

Should we not then turn us round, and look on eternity? That glorious home of all that ſurvives, and outſhines the ſun; that kingdom of ſouls immortal! Of immortal ſouls, *time* is only the maturing womb; from eternity they wait their *real* birth. Are we, my friend! matured? Or ſhall we prove abortive to the world of glory? If we were mature, why tarry here ſo long? By protracting life, Heaven ſhews not its favour to thoſe that are fit to die. Is not, the buſineſs of our day undone, the cauſe why we are ſuffered to ſit up ſo late? To be ſo long on our weary legs, after the common hour of human reſt? I fear it is. I much fear we are permitted to live, purely becauſe—we do not deſerve it.

Is it not, (my languid fellow-traveller in the deep vale of years) high time to be wiſer? leſt the greateſt of curſes ſhould fall on us, that of being wiſe too late: Which is the moſt emphatical definition of a fool. The world is worn out to us; and we are worn out to the world. The world, which knows its own intereſt, quits us, as rats a ruined houſe; if we knew *ours*, ſhould we not quit the world, as bees an exhauſted flower? We can make no more honey of it! its ſweets are gone. Where are its formerly ſweet deluſions, its airy caſtles, and glittering ſpires? Are we not left on a lonely, barren, briery heath, to grope out our weary way, through the duſk of life, to our final home? Shall not the diſſolved enchantment ſet the captive free? Are we *Torriſmonds* or *Sudburys*? Shall our dotage rivet our chains, when kind nature would knock them off? To ſpeak a

language

language even Centaurs may underſtand, "A laſt card, "well played, may yet win the game?"

Conſider, are we ſcheming ſtill? Stretching out a trembling hand, which wants to be ſupported, to graſp at the nothing that comes next? Any thing now gained would rather mock, than enrich us; can any thing enrich, that cannot be enjoyed? Graſp at new *faculties*, and new *powers*, if thou canſt find them, or new objects will only laugh us to ſcorn. But hadſt thou even *thoſe*, if the value of things is in proportion to our term in them, their price at our market ſhould fall very low.

It is a good thing to know when we have *all*, and to laugh at that cheat *more*, which is ever ſtealing our hearts. But it is as uncommon, as good. Hence, ſeniors are milking the world after it is dry. Is it not a ſhame that we ſhould be gleaning ſublunary *ſtraws*, when our harveſt of life is over? hoping an after-crop in our ſtubble? Though called to diadems, where harveſt is perpetual; where an harveſt, more than golden, profuſely crowns an eternal year?

As to the paſs which is ſo much feared; the dark, ſubterranean entry to future life; into which our weak imagination peeps, and ſtarts back, as a child at a ſhadow; all thanks to the bleſſed Goſpel, we know what will light us up a lamp in it, and leſſen its formidable gloom. I have ſeen a death-bed, the reverſe of poor *Altamont*'s, where the by-ſtanders were the greateſt ſufferers; and the king of terrors, by chriſtian patience, was over-matched. The power of religion ſhone out without a veil; nor could any riſing ſuſpicions of hypo-

criſy

criſy dim its luſtre. In ſuch ſcenes as theſe the human heart is no longer inviſible to man; and a glimpſe of heaven is diſcovered in ſuch a ſight.

We know what can make us ſleep ſweetly in the duſt: what can ſmooth the rough tranſition; ſoften death into a ſort of tranſlation, which interrupts not (bleſſed be God!) our exiſtence; nor our peace. In peace have many died; and, therefore, it is certain, all *may*. The whole ſecret for obtaining that peace is an abſolute reſignation to the moſt High; which (as hard a taſk as it ſeems to ſome) at the bottom is no more than owning him to be God. And a contrary conduct (as little as it is conſidered) has atheiſm, partial atheiſm, in it. It is queſtioning ſome of his attributes, though not denying a God. May that peace be thine! My heart beats with ardor for thy preſent peace, and future bliſs. May I ſhare it with thee! What a poor broken embrace, what a ſad fragment of friendſhip, is that which ends at the grave? Such a tranſitory tie gives a ſecond dart to death; and a double diſſolution to departing man. That of ſoul and body ſcarce more ſevere.

Would to heaven! that all friendſhips were, *evidently*, friendſhips of immortal men. Such, I mean, as gave proof of their having each other's *eternal* intereſts at heart. Modern, at leaſt, faſhionable, friendſhip flows from a polluted ſource; it taſtes too ſtrong of earth; without the leaſt tincture of *man* (as above deſcribed); without the leaſt ſpirit of *immortality* in it. Nay, worſe; it often ſprings from cauſes that will not bear the light: and reſembles the dark ſtreams of *Alpheus*, and *Arethuſa*, that

that mingle under ground: it ſhould rather reſemble *Eridanus*, which is ſaid to flow from heaven.

How many have we of theſe ſubterranean attachments? What is it ties our Centaurs together in ſo long a *ſtring?*—Leaping together the ſame barriers of the decent, and the juſt; ranging the ſame forbidden grounds; gorging at the ſame manger; neighing the ſame inflammatory tune; or being daily rid, and ſorely galled, by the domineering inſolence of the ſame inflamed miſtreſs.

Since ſuch their accompliſhments, I hope to levy a *Lapithean* infantry ſufficient ſucceſsfully to carry on the war now opened againſt them.—As *Chiron* blew the trumpet which called the *Greeks* to the ſiege of *Troy*; I hear there is a modern *Chiron*, who ſounds as many inſtruments, as *Nebuchadnezzar* did to ſummon his idolaters; and that he raiſes forces, and ceaſes not to carry on the war, at a *vaſt expence*. Doubtleſs he was typified of old by him who is ſaid in *Virgil*;

Ære *ciere viros, martemque accendere* cantu.

For my own part, my friend! I fancy my campaign will ſoon be over. I have frequent pains; and, I think I hear the Maſter call. If ſo, ſhould we not leave this world, though not yet admitted of the next? Have we not been, through life, anxiouſly providing one year for the next? And ſhall we grudge to pay half that pains for an eternity?

Conſider, my *immortal* friend! ſhould we not leave the world, before the world leaves us? It is diſmal to

be

be left. There is a noble abſence from earth, while we are yet on it. There is a noble intimacy with heaven, while we are yet beneath it. If our affection flies thither, we ſhall be welcomed by ſuperior beings, and not be miſſed by men who delight in novelties; or, if miſſed, admired the more for being *once* in the right. They muſt be ſomewhat out of this world, who would be deep in the concerns of the next; and is it not time we ſhould be ſo? Till the buſineſs of life (as it is called) is over, its *real* buſineſs is rarely begun: nor always then. Age is apt to carry its allowed title to repoſe too far: age is the moſt buſy period of human life. But its tranſactions are not with men. Therefore that abſence above-mentioned is moſt fit for us. It is a ſort of a third ſtate between this world and the next. How proper then, for the reception of thoſe, whoſe term is out, here, according to the common age of man.

And can it be hard for us to lay this world aſide, ſince they that have fared beſt in the world, have only the feweſt objections againſt it? Is it not an old tragic comedy read over and over, which by no means,

—— *Decies repetita placebit?* Juv.

To ſpeak in the licentious ſtile of comedy, man is a mule, of mixed origin, of heaven and earth: earth has had more than its ſhare of us; give heaven the reſt: and that for a *double* reaſon. All know that hope is life's cordial: it works miracles; without happineſs it makes men happy. What have been all the pleaſures of our former years, but joyous prophecies, and bold promiſes, in the name of to-morrow? Worldly *hope* in age expires.

If

If he provides not another hope, a man of years, and a man of miſery, mean the ſame thing. Therefore the ſame ſteps are to be taken, whether we would ſweeten the remaining dreg of life, or provide a triumph for eternity.

The worldly wiſhes, which an old man ſends out, are like *Noah*'s dove; they cannot find whereon to light, and muſt return to his own heart again for reſt. His natural, and, perhaps, moſt allowable and proper wiſh is for reſpect. But reſpect for age is a *virtue*. I need ſay no more to convince him, how little of it he muſt expect: and, indeed, he but ill deſerves it from others, who, by doating on the world, denies it to himſelf.

When infirmity drives the world from us, or diſeaſe confines us to our chamber, ſhall we not be all alone with the great Father of ſpirits, and ſearcher of hearts? Is it not worth while a little before-hand to practiſe our leſſon, that we may be the better prepared to ſuſtain ſuch an interview? Our wiſdom cannot add to the days, but it can lighten the burden, of life; and leſſen the terrors of death. Death forgot in youth is folly; in age, madneſs. With regard to that king of terrors, how many in years *borrow* the ſecurity of youth; for it is impoſſible it ſhould belong to them. Happy they! whom death when he comes, ſhall find at home; his viſit will have leſs of terror in it. Out of pure decency to the dignity of human nature, of which the decays and imperfections ſhould not be expoſed, men in years, by receſs, ſhould fling a veil over them, and to the world be a little buried, before they are interred.

An old man's too great familiarity with the public is an indignity to the human nature, and a neglect of the Divine. A greater intercourſe with it than the calls of duty and virtue demand, is indecent, irreligious, and contemptible; ſpeaking acquieſcence in contempt, dotage on the world, and oblivion of eternity. His fancying himſelf to be ſtill properly one of this world, and on a common foot with the reſt of mankind, is, as if a man getting drunk in the morning, after a long nap, lifting his drowſy lids at ſun-ſet, ſhould take it for break of day.

But grant him to be ſtill of this world; grant him all it can give; what is this world, but a machine played on by us by our *great enemy* for the diſſipation of human thought, whoſe ſcattered rays muſt be collected, as it were, to a focal point, in order to duly warm our devotion; and ſet a pious heart on fire? And can any happineſs ſubſiſt in age without piety? Impoſſible! Its intimacy with the world, is not for the pleaſures it can give; they are paſt: it is purely to diſlodge the thoughts of death, which intrude at that ſeaſon; that is, it is purely to decline the pleaſures of heaven.

Why, my friend! is our day of trial extended beyond the expiration of the common term? Is it not indulged to the great need our paſt conduct has of it? And ſhall our folly reverſe the kind intention of that Divine indulgence to us? Shall it ſet us farther from our God? I am never ſo ſtrongly ſtruck with the weakneſs and depravity of man, as when I ſee grey hairs playing the fool. Hope, which in other evil appearances ſupports

ports our ſpirits, fails us there. What can ſhock common ſenſe, what can create amazement, if not the failings that would diſhonour youth, in thoſe that are miraculouſly alive after the ſtated period of human life? This is an outrage to reaſon, beyond the boldneſs of the deſperado that confounds us moſt; this out-dares the felon repeating his crime, not only under the gallows, but with the cord about his neck. Where is that world into which you and I were born? It is under-ground; and a generation of ſtrangers are dancing over our coevals long ſince in the duſt. Where is that world into which we *ſhall* be born? Far, far above the ſun, if, while *we* are beneath it, we behave ourſelves like men. But if this life was our only concern, conſider, that nothing but being wiſer, that is better, than thoſe born after us, can poſſibly reſcue the decays of age from averſion and contempt.

Fain would I have my pen of ſome ſervice to the aged, now my neareſt relations, thoſe of blood, are no more. To the former am I related by like date, duty, intereſt, and above all,

——*Nunc ipſa pericula jungent.* Ov.

Still eager in worldly purſuits, warm in the chace of ſhadows, ſhall we ruſh, as down a precipice, and leap plumb into the jaws of *extempore* death?

No, let us halt in our career; pauſe on the brink; and provide for our eternal peace. Can I better expreſs my love than by preſſing it on thee? I preſs it ſtrongly. And know, my friend! that Heaven, and

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(as I have ſhewed thee) a moſt indulgent Heaven, joins my pathetic wiſh; and angels, ardent angels, ſay Amen. And what want they? (mark it well), they want nothing but thy *own* concurrence to crown their wiſhes for thy welfare.

Dear Sir,

Yours.

LETTER VI.

The DIGNITY of MAN.

The CENTAURS RESTORATION *to* HUMANITY.

The DIGNITY of MAN Resumed.

The CONCLUSION.

LETTER VI.

The DIGNITY of MAN.

HERE, Sir, I enter on that elevated theme, *The Dignity of Man.*

Major rerum mihi naſcitur ordo. VIRG.

I ſhall ſcale the ſummit of human nature, and ſet its dignity in the ſtrongeſt light; that the contraſt may ſtrike our Centaurs with a juſt ſenſe of their own ghaſtly condition; and more clearly demonſtrate the depth of their fall. Many are for degrading their nature, tha they may leſſen its duties; and for looking on themſelves as beings inſignificant, that they may be profligate beings with a better grace; and (as they would flatter themſelves) with more excuſe. They run voluntarily into this error, as men run into the dark, that they may ſin without a bluſh; framing a lie (which is the common caſe) for their apology. Their maſter *Epicurus* meant much the ſame, by ſetting the gods at ſuch a diſtance; and for their repoſe, exempting them from the trouble of inſpecting the trifles of men. A due ſenſe of the grandeur of man's nature, and deſtination, is his beſt bulwark againſt the frequent and vio-

lent aſſaults temptation makes on him. This is a ſubject which I wiſh had been taken into better hands. For, as it demands all the powers of the nobleſt pen to reach its heights; ſo the world ſtands in need of having this, above all other, preſſed home on their hearts; for all other of any great moment are implied in it. There are but few, whoſe opinions do not too much widen the diſtance between an angel, and a man. I ſhall bring them nearer together, as the beſt means for the reformation of *Centaurs* (as you ſhall ſee) and for the moſt noble exaltation of *men*.

I have juſt now obſerved, that—"Angels want no-"thing but thy own concurrence to crown their wiſhes "for thy welfare."—This is true: Shall I not then be pardoned, if I preſume to put the ſame meaning into ſomewhat an higher ſtile, and ſay (with all reverence) that heaven's deſires are at thy mercy?—If ſo, think, and think again, What art thou? Thou poor, feeble, earth-born, mortal! What art thou?—Darts not on thee a ſtream of heavenly light? Doſt thou not ſee an amazing majeſty in man? Have I not then, made my bold promiſe good? Did I not, above, tell thee, I would *ſurprize* thee with thyſelf?

Nor can I reſt here. A man is almoſt more than man can conceive; a marvellous being that riſes above himſelf, darting rays of glory beyond the reach of his own ſight. My heart is tied to this endearing, tranſporting, and triumphant, theme.

Is *thy* conſent neceſſary to finiſh what is begun, or rather, only deſigned, above? How ſtrangely this ſounds! Yet muſt I proceed in a ſtill higher ſtrain—

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In thee it is, (how ſeemingly bold, and impious ſo to ſpeak?) Yes, it is in thee, to grant, or deny, the requeſt of the Almighty.—And impious, indeed, it would be, if unauthorized by Scripture, in which that requeſt is made.

A requeſting Omnipotence?—What can ſtun, and confound thy reaſon more? What more can raviſh and exalt thy heart? It cannot but raviſh and exalt; it cannot but glorioufly diſturb, and perplex thee, to take in all *that* thought ſuggeſts. Thou child of the duſt! thou ſpeck of miſery and ſin! How abject thy weakneſs? How great is thy power? Thou crawler on earth, and, poſſible (I was about to ſay) controuler of the ſkies!

Weigh, and weigh well, the wondrous *truths* I have in view: which cannot be weighed too much: which, the more they are weighed, amaze the more: which to have ſuppoſed, before they were revealed, would have been as great madneſs; and to have preſumed on, as great ſin, as it is now madneſs and ſin, *not* to believe. Such precious, and beatifying news is brought us by revelation; that revelation which is rejected, and deſpiſed, by thoſe that affect to be thought wiſer, and happier, than the reſt of mankind.

The *truths*, I mean, are implied in what follows; *viz.* Heaven intends, deſires, labours, works miracles, or more (if more can be), for thy welfare: it preſſes thee, it importunately preſſes thee, to comply. Conſider; how art thou courted? And by whom? By Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; thy *fellow-labourers* for thy good. How is thy alliance ſought? And at what price? Angels,

inſpecting, admiring angels, cannot compute its value. An extreme of love, an extreme of glory, this, which thoſe angels (if angels could envy) might envy to man: for was it not denied to them?

Thou younger, but darling ſon of heaven! wonder; tremble; triumph!—Yes, triumph; tremble; wonder! thy greateſt emotion falls ſhort of the mighty cauſe. Thou greatly beloved, greatly favoured, greatly deſtined, and, oh! greatly endangered! take heed to thy ſteps: nor leſs take fire at thy prize.

Art thou more exalted, or terrified at what I ſay? Exaltation and fear both riſe in extremes. With both paſſions comply; highly reverence thy *own* nature; more profoundly adore the *Divine*. Adore it with voice, heart, and life: and thus to glad all heaven, aſſert, reſcue, ennoble, and with bliſs eternal crown thyſelf: for without thee, in the conſtituted order of things, heaven is unable to do it. Its almighty hand is, as it were, tied up by its own decree. Without thee, thou amazing being! (pardoned be the word ſo bold) there is impotence in heaven. Nor is it bold when explained; for impotence when voluntary, is no impeachment of power.

Is all this *rapturous?*—Yes, ſuch a rapture, as nothing but groſs ignorance, or more fatal infidelity, can forbear. Is not rapture due for felicities inexpreſſible? And what felicity is ſo much as ſecond to this? It is the cloſe, frequent, and feeling, inſpection of theſe *interiora* of man's ſublime condition, as *immortal*, and *redeem'd*, that is the higheſt cordial of human joy; and the richeſt mine of human thought. A mine deep dug

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by few! and yet without it, man is not more a ſtranger to the natives of *Saturn*, than to himſelf. Without it, he muſt want the true, genuine, vital, ſpirit of a Chriſtian. None without it can be filled with the light and comfort of the Holy Ghoſt. This, O ye Methodiſts! gives the real new birth: this enters man in quite another world. In his *former* world all things are abſolutely changed: well nigh annihilated as to his wonted paſſion for them.

The heavens declare the glory of the Lord, and the firmament ſheweth his handy-work. But the chriſtian *mine* I have mentioned, infinitely more demands our adoration and praiſe: infinitely more demands our exultation and joy. Are we tranſported, and juſtly tranſported, at the wonderful operations of nature, and decline we the contemplation of greater wonders in ourſelves? And when the former but amuſes an hour, the laſt bleſſes an eternity? In thoſe ſtupendous views it is, that the mercy of God, and glory of man, at higheſt ſhine. Hence it is, that conſtant joy is enjoined to Chriſtians as an abſolute duty: a duty, on weaker motives, as abſolutely impracticable.

You ſee, Sir, that to dive deep into man, is to dive into an ocean of Love Divine; which firſt drowns us in amazement, then lifts us into triumph: and at length, lands us (if we are wiſe) on eternal life. But too many ſwim only on the ſurface of our nature; like a feather, through their levity, incapable of ſinking to thoſe ſolid, and ſhining advantages, thoſe pearls of great price; thoſe great, awakening, and ſtrongly ſtimulating motives to virtue, that lie below. But I ſhall reſume *this ſubject*

before I cloſe. What is already ſaid, is enough to produce that good effect which you will find in the marvellous ſcene, which, very ſoon, will open on you.

The CENTAURS RESTORATION to HUMANITY.

AT preſent, my friend! we muſt quit this conſecrated, for enchanted, ground; as you will ſoon, to your ſurprize and diſguſt, perceive. I know it is not to your taſte, nor, indeed, to my own. But *levity* has its uſe, when perverſe patients will refuſe what is ſalutary, if conveyed in any vehicle leſs agreeable to their vitiated taſte; and the grave reader, who nauſeates it, ſacrifices (through too great delicacy) to mere appearances, the ſubſtance of what is right.

Thou knoweſt that our Centaurs can ſcarce be perſuaded that they are not ſtill human creatures; though *mœchantur*, *ſcortantur*, *adulterantur*, *diabolantur* (I am forced to make words that are bad enough for them); and not ſo much as retain,

——— *Veteris* veſtigia *formæ*. OV.

Are they not (to ſpeak with reverence in the language of the Prophet) as *fed horſes in the morning?* Do they not *aſſemble by troops in ladies houſes?* It is *harlot* in the original; and ſo by us tranſlated. But that is not their only objection to the Scriptures. Perhaps, an old *Arabian* proverb may have greater authority with them. What ſays it? "Let him that would be ſafe, avoid

"ſeven

" ſeven things; waſps, ſpiders, hyænas, crocodiles,
" effs, adders, and *fine* women."

Here, then, I ſhall begin my exorciſm. Its words muſt be ſtrange and barbarous, ſuited to the occaſion. Let not your ear, my friend, be ſhocked; but liſten, and wait the event.

" MAY *Lais*, *Thais*, *Limax*, *Lupa*, *Succuba*, *Quadrantaria*, *Obolaria*, *Euriole*, *Sthenio*, *Meduſa*, *Erinnys*, *Megæra*, and *Tyſiphone*—*May* all theſe, and all
" *ſuch* ladies, whether ſick or ſound, high or low, of
" blood and title, or ditch and dunghill; natives,
" foreign, or infernal—*May* this glorious group of
" *Torriſmond*'s angels, theſe gorgons, furies, harpies,
" leaches, ſyrens, centaur-making ſyrens! paid, or unpaid, keeping or kept, on fire or quenched; genevaed
" or citroned, in cloſet or cellar, in tavern, bagnio,
" brothel, round-houſe, bridewell, or newgate.—Oh!
" *may* they ceaſe from this hour, to ſing or dance,
" ſmile or frown, pleaſe or plague, pray or ſwear, our
" Britiſh, unbritiſh youth, manhood, and age, out of
" their ſenſes, health, eſtates, reputation, human nature, and hopes of heaven!

" And, theſe enchantreſſes laying aſide their ſpells,
" *may* the bewitched of *Great Britain* recover their
" *priſtine* form, as *Circe*'s herd, at the prayer of *Ulyſſes*.
" At the touch of my diſinchanting pen, *may* they leap
" out of their hides for joy; and laying hold on their
" long-deſerted definition of man, *reaſon and two legs*,
" walk uprightly for the future."

Rejoice with me, my friend! For do I dream? or didſt thou not obſerve? Didſt thou not hear?—*Intonuit lævum.* As the dark cloud which cauſed it is vaniſhed, and a flood of light ruſhes in; ſo ſhall it fare with *them.* I ſee their dawning reaſon; I ſee the break of their moral day. And what I ſee, I ſhall relate; and what I relate, though ſtrange, let no man diſbelieve.

The Centaurs that can read, on peruſal of *The Dignity of Man*, are ſtung, as the *Trojan* horſe, when *Laocoon*'s ſpear pierced his ſide; and groan as deeply as that, when

Inſonuere cavæ, gemitumque dedere cavernæ. VIRG.

Moſt of them are much affected, but differently; being at laſt fully convinced that they are *not* men. One burns his *Bolingbroke*; another an indecent ſong: this calls in his bills, pleading privilege no more: that beſpeaks a pew againſt the next quarter: a third blames his delay; ſwears he will pray directly; falls on his knees, like *Cæſar*'s horſe, — riſes again, with a ſigh, and ſolemn vow, that he will be maſter of his *Paternoſter* before to-morrow: a fourth ſubſcribes all his gains by falſe dice to the Foundling Hoſpital: a fifth orders two little boys to ſchool immediately; and ſends ten guineas to their mothers in bridewell: a ſixth, in a flame of pious zeal, damns a ſenſeleſs world; and undertakes, in leſs than a week, to demonſtrate that adultery is a crime. A ſeventh, *&c.*

But I muſt not triumph too much. I have not had equal ſucceſs with the female Centaurs. From a natural conſtancy of temper, and habitual averſion to change,

they come but ſlowly into my wiſhes. But to make amends, when they come, they come with a vengeance, and overſhoot the mark. Mr. *W—ly* (whoſe converts ſome of them are) tells them, that they ſtand not upright, unleſs they lean a little backward; like a croſier, or like themſelves, when they coyly refuſe a ſalute: thus, though converted, they find not the ſtrait line, but ſtand ſtill a little bent—to the wrong.

Beſides, of my male converts, I have ſomewhat to complain: for ſome, tho' changed at heart, yet awed by faſhion, and vain of being ſtill *fine men*, are aſhamed to own it; and *appear* to be fools to ſave their credit. Theſe hypocrites in vice, theſe moral fops, ridiculouſly good, may be called *little* men in Centaurs ſkins; or coward virtue in maſquerade.

And worſt of all, of ſome Centaurs I am quite in deſpair. They fly my pen, and will not be *touched* for their diſtemper. But, being deep ſtung by worſe than the *Tarantula*, run mad for muſic, and dance themſelves to death. Others, with *Swift* (in that reſpect a Centaur himſelf) look on the noble quadrupede as ſuperior to the man. Others, on the contrary, approve, and heartily wiſh a *reſtoration* to humanity: but are careleſs, and indolent. They would, indeed, if a dæmon was not in poſſeſſion, they *would* be good. But will not be at the trouble of bringing a writ of *ejectment*, tho' *Sophronius* proffers to draw it up for them. The loweſt price of virtue is vigilance, and induſtry; and if it coſts us no more, it comes very cheap.

As for thoſe that are truly conſcious of their calamity, and heartily deſirous of an eſcape, mark the good effect

of

of the leaſt tendency to goodneſs; the mighty change, a reſtoration of the human figure is actually begun. But the proceſs is gradual; nature advances, never leaps. They became not centaurs all at once.

Nemo repente fuit turpiſſimus. JUV.

As evil habits, which occaſioned their transformation, were gradually contracted, it is no wonder, that their recovery ſhould prove equally gradual, and ſlow. One ſheds a mane, another drops a tail; and appears only as too cloſely docked: ſome wonder to ſee ſlender fingers ſprouting thro' hoofs by their penitential tears, mollified into fleſh: ſome, like dancing dogs, continue upright ſome time; but tired of that unnatural reſtraint, drop into Centaurs for life. So dangerous in moral diſtempers, as well as natural, is a relapſe: ſome quite reſtored, yet ſtill retain ſo much of their former nature, that they are apt to trip, if a ſtrong temptation, like a ſtone, or cart-rut, lies acroſs their way: ſome can ſcarce believe their good fortune, and fear it is a dream. Others, too ſanguine, cry out, brother! to the firſt man they ſee; who ſtarts at his new relation, with a hide ſtill ſticking at his heels.

What a loud call do I hear among them for things ſtrange, and new? For dreſſes ſuited to the human ſhape; for pleaſures ſuited to the human mind; for bibles, prayer-books, debt-books; for virtuous conſorts, faithful friends, and fit objects of charity; for rational improvement and employments: no longer for Newmarket trappings; but for human ornaments. This, however, where the Reſtoration is complete. Poor *Sudbury*

is

is ſtill awkwardly hopping on three legs; while others ſtand firmly planted on half four: one of whom, more learned than the reſt, cries out:

Πλέον ἥμισυ παντὸς. HES.

The reſt naturally take it for a pious thankſgiving, and give a loud Amen.

They that are quite recovered, arrayed in decent plain apparel, not dappled as the morning, with embroidery, or with lace all over liſted like the beautiful *Indian* aſs, call a council; and their firſt manly reſolution is to proclaim peace with the *Lapithæ*, or men of virtue; with whom, from time immemorial, the Centaurs have been at war. *Chiron* bent his bow againſt them: but of war various has been the fortune between them; till within this laſt half century, the Centaurs increaſing both in numbers and boldneſs, wearing frontlets of braſs on their foreheads, and *Horace*'s *Æs triplex* on their breaſts; and having of late a mighty giant at their head, whoſe quills, more fatal than the porcupine's, threatened a thouſand deaths at once, they began to dream of nothing leſs than victory complete. But the preſent re-inforcement of their enemies will turn the ſcale againſt them. I ſay re-inforcement; for the next ſtep my converts take, is to liſt into the *Lapithean* ſervice, determined to meet their late friends in no friendly ſort, under a banner with this motto,

Quid verum, atque decens, curo & rogo, & omnis in hoc ſum.

Which promiſes victory: for they are very formidable foes, who have had the fortitude firſt to conquer themſelves.

At

At the news of their revolt offended *Torrifmond*, burning for revenge, cries, Ha, ha, fnuffs the battle from afar,

Collectumque premens volvit fub naribus ignem. VIR.

The glory of his noftrils is terrible. And ftill more abundantly his heroic choler rifes on hearing that their firft deftined enterprize is againft *Bolingbroke*-caftle; That delight of his eyes, and defiance of his foes: For he deems it impregnable; becaufe it is moated round with *Acheron*, and its afpiring, proud battlements threaten heaven.

This caftle was built out of the various ruins of many demolifhed forts of infidelity, pompoufly put together, faced over with a material more fhining than folid; and cemented with untempered mortar. *Sophronius* † heads the laudable enterprize. The caftle is taken as was antient *Babylon*. He firft turns the general ftream of the nation, by the force of ftrong and folid eloquence, into a new channel, as *Cyrus* did the river *Euphrates*; then entering the caftle, and finding the garrifon turning things facred to prophane ufe, and drowned in debauch; obtains a fudden and complete victory; but is a moft merciful conqueror: For, inftead of putting any to death, he only puts the moft fenfible of them out of countenance: And to their own darling delights, and boafted glories, inftead of the gallies, condemns them for life. Obliging them, however, in acknowledgment of his clemency, to wear yellow

† An excellent writer in this controverfy, now in the prefs.

cockades

cockades impreſſed with theſe words, "*Be thou a Cen-*
"*taur ſtill!*" The bad man's choice includes his puniſhment.

The ſame *Sophronius*, adorned with his well-deſerved mural crown, reſcues the character of a late pious and learned prelate, which the Centaurs boaſted *Achilles*, (who,

Jura negat ſibi nata, nihil non arrogat,) HOR.

had dragged, like *Hector*'s body, round the town in the dirt: For the glory of *Britain*, and for the light and emulation of poſterity, I ſee it inſcribed on a column of adamant; with a *Bolingbroke couchant* emboſſed on the baſe; who now contributes to ſupport (as much as ſuch a feeble *Atlas* can) that celeſtial character, which he lately laboured to deſtroy; proud of his uncircumciſed *reaſon*; which reaſon, notwithſtanding had evidently loſt its *authority* with himſelf: For when *that* is preſerved, ſenſe ſubmits to reaſon; and when ſenſe ſubmits to reaſon, reaſon ſubmits to the revealed word of God. And (ſince ſome are in love with words) I muſt obſerve, that reaſon ſtooped to revelation, is reaſon ſtill; only reaſon more reaſonable; and its great hazard of error is all that it has loſt.

And now, my friend! what ſhall I ſay on this happy revolution? Shall I not out-boaſt *Auguſtus?* He ſaid of *Rome, Latericeam inveni, marmoream reliqui.* I, of *London, Inveni equinam, reliqui humanam.*

Nothing remains but to cleanſe the now-deſerted *ſtables*, and to render them fit for human uſe; and to perſuade

ſuade the ſhe-grooms, who kept them, into ſome more decent, and leſs diabolical, courſe of life; eſpecially my patroneſs; who for the honour (as ſhe calls it) of my Dedication, has promiſed to give into my ſuperſtition; and to play fair, at leaſt on *Sundays*, and learn her Catechiſm, when the *maſquerades*, for the ſeaſon, are over: Which, out of an unſurmountable regard for the firſt, and moſt amorous, and moſt muſical, ſon, *Chiron*, ſhe confeſſes ingenuouſly, ſhe cannot forbear. For ladies love a Centaur ſtill.

The DIGNITY of MAN Reſumed.

IT is high time, my friend! to quit this fairy land, of which, I know, you are heartily tired; and to perform my promiſe in reſuming *The Dignity of Man*; a theme which my heart affects, and which your conduct in ſome meaſure, inſpires. And who can think of it, unimproved? He who *thinks* of his Dignity, neceſſarily thinks of his God: And he who *values* his Dignity, as neceſſarily worſhips and obeys Him. In a due ſenſe, therefore, of human Dignity, our endangered virtue finds her moſt powerful guard.

Think you that I have carried the Dignity of Man too high? Spare the ſacred page. "There, one of "*Adam*'s ſeed converſes face to face with his Creator. "Another is called his friend. He who made the "worlds delights to be called the ſon of a third. He "who made the worlds even died for the meaneſt of "men. The meaneſt of men has it within his power "to be an heir of the moſt mighty God, and a joint-

"heir

"heir with the moſt bleſſed Jeſus." Abſolves not this the boldeſt ſtroke of my pen? What can raiſe our ſelf-eſtimation ſo high, what can aggrandize human nature ſo much as this?

In heaven's great, and conſtant *effort* for our welfare, is capitally written the Dignity of Man. *That* is a key to the moral world, and opens, and explains the reaſon of all God's otherwiſe myſterious, conduct in it. Every ſtep of which is evidently calculated for man's preſent, or future, felicity; or both. The long ſhining ſeries, the golden chain of all God's marvellous acts, from the beginning to the cloſe of time, ſpeaks his uninterrupted regard for human nature; and what can more loudly proclaim human Dignity than this? O let it not be ſaid, that Man's Dignity is declared by all things, but the manners of man!

As diſtant as they may be thought by the thoughtleſs, heaven and earth are ſo near together, ſo ſhot (as it were) into one another, that good men are truly *foreigners on earth*; *have their converſation in heaven*; *are fellow-citizens with the ſaints*, and *of the houſhold of God*. To ſpeak alluſively to the patriarchal viſion, good men are angels; only, as yet, at the bottom of the ladder, and ſome angels are only men made perfect, at the top of it. As a man from an embryo, ſo differs an angel from a man; what one is, the other ſoon ſhall be. Since this is the caſe (and a moſt glorious caſe it is), and ſince by ſuch multitudes it is either not conſidered, or not known;

O fortunati nimium, bona ſi ſua norunt! VIRG.

would

would be no needleſs memorandum, or improper motto, for all mankind.

But you ſtill have your objection on the whole—— "Will not raiſing ſo high, and dwelling ſo long on "the Dignity of Man, occaſion pride?" No; on the reverſe, a due ſenſe of it will neceſſitate humility. Pride ſprings from a conceit, which an individual has of his ſuperiority over ſome others of the ſame ſpecies. The Dignity I ſpeak of is equally the Dignity of *all* men; and what levels, cannot exalt. It will *neceſſitate* humility; becauſe without *that*, it cannot preſerve itſelf; our native Dignity will die in the reſult. As for that Dignity which occaſions your objection, we have, I confeſs, too much of it. We have in abundance what may be called *lunar* great men. Men in themſelves opaque, who borrow beams from their circumſtances, or ſituation; which beams they ſhew, like the moon, by night: I mean, when ignorance prevails; then the darkened underſtandings of their admirers give them leave to ſhine.

Theſe lunar grandees have generally many little ſurrounding ſatellites, that help, by their adulations, to gild their opacity. But of ſuch great men, who are forced to *aſſume* (as men muſt plunder, who would be gainers where nothing is due), it muſt be ſaid, that the greateſt of them would be greater ſtill, if they would only pleaſe to be a little leſs.

They only have *ſolar*, or ſelf-born, light, who live up to the Dignity of their nature. The light is not only their own, and illuſtrious; but inextinguiſhable, and

and eternal. Theſe, as they are the greateſt, are alſo the moſt humble, of mankind. For they well know, that our grandeur is to be looked for in the love of God, not in the merit of man. And therefore they ſet it down as a maxim (and a maxim moſt true, and uſeful it is), "No man ever thought too highly of his nature, "or too meanly of himſelf."

Here would I ceaſe. But how hard to get looſe from this ever-teeming, all-important, and inexhauſtible, theme? It fills with ſerene joy the ſuperior region of the ſoul; and denies entrance to the clouds and ſtorms of worldly perturbation, and care. Such the height of its joy, that muſic, and wine, leave the raiſed hearts of our ſons of delight, far, far, below. And yet how is this glorious ſubject in moſt minds, by the love of the world, cloſe compreſſed, and folded up, as an oak in an acorn, or a man in the womb? To develope, and expand it, how great my deſire? In which of its thouſand ſhining lights ſhall I ſet it, for our final contemplation of its mighty moment to man.

Man is the moſt noble ſtudy of man. Let him circle the globe, let him traverſe the ſkies; and then, for ſomething more worthy his notice, and admiration, return to himſelf. To himſelf he is a theatre immenſe: And was reputed ſuch, when that theatre had much leſs to exhibit, than, at preſent, it can boaſt; and when it was but faintly illuminated with the glimmering beams of far more feeble lights. The ſo-renowned *Know thyſelf*, was nothing but a precept enjoining a cloſe inſpection and ſurvey of this theatre; yet that precept, as to its Author, was held divine; and as to its practice, the

ſupreme

ſupreme wiſdom of man. That precept is now exalted into an aweful command from heaven; and that theatre is conſecrated into a venerable temple; a temple of the Holy Spirit.

As in ſome pieces of perſpective, by the preſſure of the eye, ſo in this temple, by the preſſure, or perſeverance of thought, the magnificent proſpect is opened, and aggrandized, ſtill more and more; and opening diſcovers the full Dignity of Man. In what does that conſiſt? In the marvellous things the Almighty has done, and deſigned, for him. And if ſo, this ſurvey gives at once the greateſt *virtue*, and the greateſt *bleſſing*, of life. For who can ſee thoſe marvellous things without an ardent *love of God*, which is the ſupreme virtue of man? And who can reflect on ſuch indulgence paſt, without an *abſolute truſt* in *ſuch* a friend for the future; which of man is the Supreme Bleſſing?

But this bleſſing, and this virtue, this glory, and comfort of life, is loſt to thoſe to whom this temple is ſhut. And it is ſhut to the careleſs and ignorant; to the ſlothful, and unawakened, in the moſt illuſtrious theory of the Chriſtian religion. If therefore ſuch men, in what has been advanced, ſhall find any thing like a key to this yet unopened temple; and ſhall enter its ſacred, and ſurpriſing receſſes, and read the wonders of Divine Love in it; that is, in themſelves, in their own condition, and proſpects; if they ſhall ſee, and contemplate, the three Perſons of the Godhead, before creation, aſſuming, and through time's whole length, exerciſing, their ſeparate parts, and provinces of Philanthropy; and ſhall behold an innumerable flight of angels for ever on the wing to receive

receive their commands, and ſpeed away, on various diſpatches, for the temporal, and eternal, welfare of man—How ſhould I rejoice? For ſuch a key would be next in value to the key of heaven. It opens the porch, the preliminary ſcene to it. Therefore have I kept it on the anvil ſo long; and yet how unfiniſhed at laſt? May ſome maſter-hand accompliſh, and multitudes open the yet abſolutely unknown ſcene of their own nature, and bleſſed deſtination, with it.

And now, my friend, tell me, how muſt *his* love of glory fail; how muſt his *ambition* creep, who, after the ſtrong inſpiration of ſuch a view as this, miſerably confines it beneath the ſun? Conſider this view, and ſee how high human nature may ſoar; then look down on the Centaur, and ſee (if thou canſt bear the ſight) how low the ſons of heaven may fall? Shall a being whoſe intereſts ſpread ſo wide as to take in both ends of the creation; ſhall a being deeply concerned in what was done in the days of *Adam*, and more deeply ſtill, in what ſhall be done in the great day of conſummation; ſhall ſuch an expanſive, and far-intereſted, being, with the moſt ſordid, and deſpicable, ſelf-denial, and the moſt inconceivably criminal *Poverty of Spirit*, impriſon his ſtifled thought, and nail down his little heart to the narrow ſpan of this preſent life! God forbid. If there is the leaſt ſenſe of Dignity, or fear of ſhame; the leaſt ſpark of Man, alive, let us conſider that we are not only the favourites, but the ſons too, of heaven, and obey, in this our voyage of human life, as *Æneas* in his from *Troy*, the *Delian* oracle,

Antiquam exquirite matrem. VIRG.

But

But our overwhelming ſhame, and almoſt incurable miſery, is, that we are ſo *carnalized* by our luſts, that our heavenly * mother, in our eſteem, has no bleſſing for us; that a *ſpiritual* Paradiſe, is no Paradiſe; that it is a Paradiſe we wiſh loſt; one from which we deſire to fall; and to wallow, *Epicuri de grege porci* in our beloved mire. And yet what is this ſpot of earth which ſo ſwallows us up, and in its gulph of obſcenities extinguiſhes our love of heaven? Its enchantment is very ſhort. A few days, a few hours, may make us as wiſe as *Solomon*. For reſt aſſured, earth's rankeſt idolater, who *now*, perhaps, in our flouriſhing ſchool of infidelity, thinks a wiſer than *Solomon* is here, will, at the cloſe of life, in his aching heart, aſk *Solomon's* pardon for not believing him before.

I believe that wiſe, and experienced prince, whoſe wiſdom and experience was deſigned to ſpare future ages their own fatal experience in folly; and, cloſing with his *laſt* ſentiment, the ſum of his Divine Philoſophy, affirm, that many a philoſopher may juſtly be reputed a fool; that as there is but one God, one Trial, one great Tribunal, one Salvation; ſo there is but one Wiſdom; that all which, devoid of *that*, aſſumes the name, is but folly of different colours, and degrees; gay, grave, wealthy, lettered, domeſtic, political, civil, military, recluſe, oſtentatious, humble, or triumphant; and is *ſo* called in the language of angels, in the ſole-authentic, and unalterable ſtyle of *eternity*.

That awful word inſpires; and awakens ideas that ſlept before; it points to heaven; and ſhews me where

* Gal. iv. 26.

I fail.

I fail.—Though ſtudious to do it juſtice, I have wronged my theme. And wronged it much. Somewhat more is wanting to conſummate, and crown, the Dignity of Man. What have I advanced? "That man is *near* to "the bleſſed angels?" Is he not more?—Yes, moſt adorable Jeſus! man is more; much more. O whither doſt Thou call me? Whither doſt Thou tranſport aſtoniſhed human thought? I ſcarce dare look up to the ſummit of ſuch ſtupendous love. Leave I not cherubim and ſeraphim below? Ye firſt-born of light! ye thrones! dominions! principalities! and pow'rs! What do I behold? How awed, and how raptured; with what proſtration of heart, what elevation of joy, from this remote region, this loweſt vale of the creation, this land of darkneſs, and ſhadow of death, look I up through incumbent clouds of miſery and ſin, and behold—a *Man* in heaven! In the higheſt heaven! In union with the Moſt High! In union with *your* moſt adored, and eternal King! And ſo throned in authority, to *you* ſo ſuperior in power, as to make ceaſeleſs interceſſion for the reſt of mankind; not for *thoſe* whoſe fall left ſeats empty in heaven: Oh aid me with *your* language, with words more than human to praiſe Him! that Advocate unwearied for his relations (proud language!) for his earth-born relations, and friends, below.

Is not this *almoſt* too much for human modeſty to mention? For human frailty to credit? For human corruption to admit?—But is it not alſo *far* too much for human gratitude to leave unproclaimed, unreſounded, unadored? *I go to my Father, and your Father, to my God, and your God.* What heart-ſubduing, thought-overwhelming, man-exalting, words are theſe? What

an amazing, I had almoſt ſaid *levelling*, condeſcenſion of the Deity! What an amazing, I had almoſt ſaid what a *deifying*, ſublimation of man!

O bleſſed revelation! that opens ſuch wonders. O dreadful revelation! if it opens them in vain. And are there thoſe with whom they go for nought? Strange men! in poſſeſſion of a bleſſing, the bare hopes of which ſupported the ſpirits of the wiſe, for four thouſand years, under all the calamities of life, and terrors of death; and know they not that it is in their hands? Or knowing, caſt it away as of no value? A bleſſing, the very ſhadow of which made the body of the Patriarchal, and Jewiſh religion! A bleſſing, after which the whole earth panted, as the hart for the water-brooks! A bleſſing on which the heavenly hoſt were ſent to congratulate mankind; and ſing the glad tidings into their tranſported hearts! A bleſſing, which was more than an equivalent for Paradiſe loſt! And is this bleſſing declined, rejected, exploded, deſpiſed, ridiculed? O unhappy men!—The frailty of man is almoſt as incomprehenſible as the mercies of God.

Who then can inculcate too much the Dignity of Man? For what equally to a due ſenſe of it can inſpire a contempt of the world, a fondneſs for which occaſions the madneſs I deplore? Indeed a due ſenſe of it, evidently, includes the whole of our duty. It inſpires high veneration, and great gratitude, to GOD, who gave it; it inſpires a reverence for ourſelves, which is of utmoſt moment to our character and peace; and it inſpires a proper regard for all mankind, as equal ſharers in it:

Which regard would prevent infinite miſchief; and baniſh half the miſeries of life.

This, its univerſal uſe, its nature ſo pregnant of good effects, determined me to the choice of this too much neglected ſubject. And perhaps, I have now ſet it in the ſtrongeſt light. But if not; its importance is ſuch that it ſhould be ſet in *all* lights, and from every point that imagination can ſuggeſt, and reaſon authorize, ſtrike, if poſſible, the degenerate, deeply-ſunk, and ever-groveling, human heart. He that looks not on man in the light above, or ſome light ſimilar, and equivalent, knows not himſelf; is a perfect ſtranger at home; his heart wanders an exile from his deſtined felicity; he deprives himſelf of the powerful impulſe which he ſo much wants, and which nature denies, and which revelation deſigned him, for his more vigorous advance in virtue here: and his more ſublime aſcent in glory hereafter: Which two are the whole of his happineſs; all the reſt is extrinſic, precarious, tranſient, and, inevitably, mortal.

And who will dare ſay, that he who declines, or falls from the noble, and elevating object of contemplation above-mentioned, and the glorious hopes it inſpires, into the barren field of amuſement, and trifle; or into the beſtial abyſs of a few years debauch, for his portion; who will dare affirm, that ſuch a wretch differs not as much in reaſon, and happineſs, from the true Chriſtian, as a *quadruped* differs, in form, from a man? It is not form, but manners, which make humanity. The mould in which we are caſt, only ſays what we *ſhould be*; nothing but our conduct tells us what *we are*. What

wretches are they who contradict their figure; and accuse nature of having set a wrong stamp on their lying clay? The most despicable and deplorable being under heaven is a Pagan in a Christian land. He is like a rank growth of poison in Paradise. He confines that thought which should set out at the creation, and travel down with wonder and adoration, at every step, through the countless mercies and miracles of God for man, into nature's final dissolution; and thence launch for a never-ending voyage in a blessed Eternity,— to the nothing of threescore years; and the wretched means of annihilating that nothing, of contracting that span; lust exhausts, luxury overwhelms, and, by heaping on fuel, quite puts out the fire.

Where is that *Dignity* which reason exacts, and which revelation exalts, in man? In what I have said on that subject, I have, I think, done more to our purpose, than he who measures the heavens, and numbers the stars. I have taken (as I conceive) the true measure of Man. That extensive measure rising above the skies, which the Centaur dwarfs down to the scanty span of the brute creation, to the *bestia triumphanti*; and making (might I so speak) a dunghill of our condition, with the cock in the fable, for a grain of sensuality, spurns the jewel away; the powers angelic, the radiant beams of the divinity, in the *real* Man.

But while I contemplate his grandeur (so mixt our nature, so great, and little, is Man), I feel his weakness: In mind, and body, I feel his infirmities—Pain, this instant, stops my pen—Stops it short of what I had proposed to say.—It bids me take, while I may, my leave

of

of him I love. — I take a ſolemn, becauſe, perhaps, a final, leave. It is, at leaſt, poſſible, we may meet no more. No more in this foreign land; in this gloomy apartment of the boundleſs univerſe of God.

O Thou! the laſt, and ſtrongeſt hold that earth has on me! my friend in Jeſus Chriſt! my rival in immortal hope! and my companion (I truſt) for eternity! come to my boſom: Though ſo far remote, I take thee to my heart. Souls ſuffer no ſeparation from obſtruction of matter, or diſtance of place; oceans may roll between us, and climates interpoſe, in vain. The whole material creation is no bar to the winged mind. Farewel.— Through boundleſs ages, fare thou well. The Dignity of Man, and bleſſing of heaven, be with thee! The broad hand of the Almighty cover thee: May'ſt thou ſhine, when the ſun is quenched! May'ſt thou live, and triumph, when time expires!

This cordial duty done, this human debt diſcharged, my mind is eaſed, my ſpirits revive; my pain is leſs. And when this endleſs letter is ended, I ſhall drop thee for *the preſent*; and this idle pen, and an idler world (that other feather in the ſcale of eternity) *for ever*. He that drops the world, before that drops him, he *only* knows its real value; and the value of his own ſoul. And whatever the gaiety of the world pretends to, he *only* can have a ſolid, permanent, and uninterrupted joy of heart, who builds it on the rock; on hope of the Divine Mercy. Give a man the world, and give him no more; and his happineſs is at an end: The human heart will neceſſarily feel a futurity, through all the ſuper-abundance earth can heap on it: Nothing can poſſibly

give it a peace independent of an hereafter: That point of view in his creation, that purchaſe of blood in his redemption, and yet in human conduct, that ever neglected *All* of man.

Aſk the laſt bill of mortality; aſk pleaſure's or ambition's triumph moſt triumphant, what is human life? Knowledge of the world recommends receſs; knowledge of life reconciles to the grave. Few ſufficiently conſider how great mercy is implied in the grant of death. With a heart quite diſengaged, its cable cut, imploring a ſmooth paſſage, and gentle gale, bound for that port whence none returns, I wait the mighty MASTER's call: That call irreſiſtible, which every moment ſhould expect; which every fool forgets; every knave dreads; every wiſe man welcomes; and every monarch obeys.

And yet, my friend, ſome of our few coævals cloſe not altogether with this way of thinking; but rather ſeem to judge, that ſome little degree of precipitation may be laid to its charge. As the dial knows not the hour it points out; ſo they, by their infirmities and decays, diſcover their time of day to all, but themſelves. Their deſires grow ſtronger as enjoyments grow more coy. It is ſomewhat to be feared, that their hearts gravitate, almoſt as much as their ſcarce-animated clay; and take but few, and feeble flights above the level of the world; though very excellent things are ſpoken of thee, Thou welcome Haven of Eternal Reſt! Thou delightful Region of inextinguiſhable Love! Thou great Goal of Perfection! Thou bright Meridian of Glory! Thou boundleſs Ocean of *unrepenting Pleaſure!* Thou City of God!

And

And is man invited to this fullneſs of fruition? And is man *importuned* to partake the glories of the Almighty? —He that weighs not well this tranſcendent height of Love Divine, is far from being able to comprehend the terrible depth of human guilt. And what guilt ſo deep as that of a *baptized* infidel? A rank heathen riſing out of the ſacred font, is *reaſon*'s greateſt ſhock, the deepeſt wound of rectitude, the blackeſt brand of earth, the ſigh of angels, a ſecond ſpear in the ſide of the moſt Bleſſed Jeſus, and the ſupreme triumph of the foe to God, and Man.

Moſt gracious God! in *happineſs* and *dignity*, how widely diſtant is man from man? In both, what an immenſe ſuperiority has the pious believer? Scarce ſeems of the ſame ſpecies the believing, and apoſtate, world. To the *firſt*, how juſtly may we cry out, O ye happy ſons of the fallen *Adam!* where is the damage you received from your father's fall? Where are the once lamenting miſeries of life; where are the once unſurmountable terrors of death, fled? I diſcern the Dignity of man, when his carcaſe is in the duſt. I congratulate his happineſs while the worm is feaſting on him. Rejoice, O ye dead! exult and ſing, ye dark inhabitants of the grave! For do I not behold, even in the grave, the comfort of heaven; when, with an eye of Chriſtian faith, in heaven I behold a *Man?* The Man Chriſt Jeſus? And with tranſport, and adoration let me reſound the lofty language of the prophet,—*A man the fellow of the Almighty* †.

† Zachar. c. xiii. 7.

The CONCLUSION.

AND now, my friend! let us conſider how deplorably wretched is that man amongſt us, who is deaf to *ſuch* a voice, and blind to *ſuch* a ſight! And how criminally wretched is he, if he voluntarily declines them? If he voluntarily recals the ſuſpended curſe; obſtinately preſents diſarmed death with his mortal ſting again; and pours out, in his diſtraction, all the phials of its original bitterneſs on the days, how diſmal and unredeemed, of an apoſtate human life? What a formidable *revelation* does ſuch a man beſpeak in lieu of that which brought pardon and peace? What a revelation of no *glad tidings* awaits him, when his now-involving cloud breaks, and truth thunders on the dreadfully illumined ſoul, at the no-diſtant hour of death?

It is, indeed, in man's option, which of theſe *revelations* he will admit (one he muſt); but it is not in man's wiſdom to make the leaſt apology for a wrong option in ſo plain and important a point. A point how plain? I ſhall here juſt touch on a ſingle proof of the truth of Chriſtianity, which renders any further proof, among proofs innumerable, unneceſſary with me, to create and ſupport our Chriſtian faith.

Every thing in the *natural* world is a proof of a God; and almoſt every thing in the *moral* world is a proof of a revelation. As, in the material univerſe, all exactly correſponds with the previous ideas of it in the Divine Mind; and in a ſubſtantial copy renders legible to man its inviſible pattern, in the thought of the Almighty;

ſo

ſo a complete hiſtory of mankind (if ſuch could be had) would be little more than the ſame Almighty's *prophetic* word in Scripture, materialized into fact. The prophets are more accurate and authentic hiſtorians of the *future* than the moſt happy genius, uninſpired, can poſſibly be of the *paſt*. And want we *miracles* for our conviction? The ſeries of Scripture prophecies accompliſhed, is the moſt ſtriking of miracles: It is a miracle not expiring in a tranſient act! but of great longævity, perſiſting in a perpetual increaſing weight and validity, through the protracted courſe of many thouſand years. It is a living, growing, permanent, paramount, miracle, lighted up as a lamp of illumination for all ages; that all able to ſee, might be quite unable to diſbelieve; quite unable to retain reaſon, and, at the ſame time, renounce belief. For if the Scripture prophecies are fulfilled, the Scripture is the word of God; and if the Scripture is the word of God, Chriſtianity cannot be falſe. Shall we reject it as falſe, when, in the *preſent* fate of almoſt all nations, we are ſurrounded, and condemned, by a full ocular demonſtration of its being true! Let us diſpute our own exiſtence, if we would continue of a piece with this.

Where is our natural curioſity? And that, in points which concern us moſt? Would we know what we *are*; or what we *may*, or *muſt* be to all eternity? Nothing but revelation can tell us either. So that if we acted on no higher motive than mere inſtinct, revelation would be precious in our ſight. But vice extinguiſhes not our reaſon only, but our inſtinct too, when it would do us any good. Either the ſtrongeſt inſtinct of curioſity is

extinguiſhed by it, or there is an aſtoniſhing, and pernicious ſelf-denial in infidels, if their moſt natural curioſity is ſtill alive. Revelation was written for our inſtruction; and are we too wiſe to be inſtructed by God himſelf? Throw we by unread, and as of no conſequence, an unſealed letter ſent to us from the Almighty?

In our infidels it is no leſs than defiance of common ſenſe, no leſs than hardened impudence to the rational nature of man, to pretend, that, on due inquiry, they want proof of the truth of the Goſpel. Its proof is not only great, but amazing; it is not only ſufficient to convince, but aſtoniſh: Such its accumulated, overwhelming, evidence, ſo truly *marvellous its light*, that if rejected, it lays us under a neceſſity of rejecting reaſon, and revelation, together. And is not *reaſon obeyed*, the ſole dignity, glory, grandeur, of gods, and men? Nothing can ſo much degrade as the violation of reaſon; and no violation of reaſon is equal to a wrong option in this point ſupreme. Too faint is the ſtrongeſt colouring of all the ſevere fables of antiquity, to reach an abſurdity ſo abſurd.

That of *Circe*'s Sty, and *Chiron*'s Stud, falls ſhort of the mark. For reaſon, in thoſe days, had not ſuch powerful motives to combat, or ſuch glaring lights to reſiſt. And guilt blackens, in proportion to the ſtrength of the lights reſiſted, and the motives overcome.

Since then (as has been proved) if reaſon makes a man, by ceaſing to be Chriſtians, they ceaſe to be men; by what term ſhall we call thoſe, whom no term can defame? Let, therefore, your offended ſiſter pardon my

parable;

parable; and let no honeſt man, for the future, ſo far offend propriety, and profane our language, as to join in one abuſed word ſuch repugnant ideas, as thoſe of the Centaur and the man; *one* the idea of a being, horridly rejoicing in the miſerable, and miſtaken, thought, that this ſhort life, ſhortened by vice and vanity, is his All; and that, like the ſnuff of a candle, it ſhall go out for ever: rejoicing to think, that after all his buſtle and ambition, he ſhall only by his *putrid carcaſe*, add rankneſs to a clod of earth, and defile the dirt: The *other* idea is that of a being big with humble, but triumphant, hope, of exalting with his *immortal ſpirit*, joy celeſtial; of adding melody to ſeraphic choirs, in ceaſeleſs Hallelujahs to their Eternal King. "Sing "praiſes, ſing praiſes to our God; ſing praiſes, ſing "praiſes to our King. Praiſe him, all ye angels! "praiſe him, all his hoſt! praiſe him, ſun and moon! "praiſe him all ye ſtars, and light!" For a fairer light, a nobler ſtar, a more illuſtrious ſun is riſen; the ſun of righteouſneſs with healing in his wings; and all the glories of unbounded creation are outſhone by the ſmalleſt beam of the goſpel; by the fainteſt hope of wrath appeaſed, and eternal life.

Yet this is that light, which ſome, in their ſuperior wiſdom, would extinguiſh as ſuperfluous to man, and ſet up the dim taper of their reaſon in its ſtead:

O thou worſt guide, philoſopher, and friend!
Say, for thou know'ſt, what is it to be wiſe?
Eſſ. on Man.

With equal *wiſdom*, thou mighteſt imagine the ſun ſu-

perfluous, and unneceſſary to the material world; and call on chaos for primæval darkneſs, as the great bleſſing of mankind. Say, for, *now* indeed, thou knoweſt, is not *Lucifer* in the liſt of ſuch benefactors as theſe?

Though in *this* his lordſhip is quite as good a friend to mankind, as he is a philoſopher in his *materiality* of the ſoul; yet I will venture advancing towards that precious doctrine, ſo far, as to call, without ſcruple, ſuch ſort of imaginations the *thoughts of the body*; for from the body's predominance they, neceſſarily, riſe: And that neceſſity proves the neceſſity of religion, which they reſiſt: ſo that ſuch men (which, perhaps, they are not aware of), while, as much as they can, they condemn religion, they commend it too; they as loudly call for it, as the diſeaſe for the cure. For religion is nothing, but an expedient for ſupporting, againſt the body's aſſaults and encroachments, the ſacred intereſts of the ſoul.

At your requeſt, Sir, in the wide-ſpread ruins of our *faith* and *virtue*, I have taken a ſlight view of a more melancholy ſcene, than could be preſented by famine, peſtilence, or the ſword: but, by God's grace we ſhall repent; and not ſuffer our greateſt glory to become our greateſt dread; not ſuffer our prime and unſpeakable bleſſing, *immortality*, to render exiſtence the moſt inſupportable curſe. What a terrible inverſion is this of the high favours of heaven! This muſt be the caſe, when man is all *ſenſe*; For to ſenſe nothing exiſts but the *preſent*. Our preſent is ſo dear, that our future is undone. Strange conduct! when our ſtep *out* of life is ſo ſhort, and ſo ſure, ſudden, and

innumerable our accidents *in* it, that almoſt every moment aſſures us, that unleſs in time we lay hold on our *inviſible*, and, to reaſon alone, exiſting God, we ſhall ſoon fall from all we held ſo dear; and that then, not only all our happineſs, but all our hope, is at an end.

What is there, O my countrymen! O my friend! O my poor, endangered, immortal ſoul! what is there, from *Adam* to this hour, but fully confirms what I ſay? The world allures us; the world condemns us; he who takes that kind advice, which thro' his own experience, the world conveys, will deſpiſe all its charms. As ignorance teems with infidelity, ſo knowlege is a faſt friend of faith. If we would but know, what we cannot but know; if we would but believe our ſenſes in what paſſes, and our common records in what has paſſed; it would not only reconcile us to, but, almoſt, ſupply the place of, our *Creed*; ſo very natural a growth is the Chriſtian of the man.

As natural a growth of an infidel is a beaſt: a beaſt by God uncreated; by *Adam* unnamed. That defect *Adam*'s meaneſt ſon has ſupplied, by writing CENTAUR in the horrid gap, which the bold infidel has made, by the deſperate eraſure of his chriſtian name.

Is this thought too opprobrious, and a term of reproach?—I will make ſome amends by a ſhort hint of advice, which may ſave from reproach the whole length of their lives. "Let not the brute any longer run away "with the man, leſt ſomething more dreadful ſhould "run away with the brute."

If this advice is refuſed, as *Alexander* ſaid of the *Perſian* effeminate army, *there are many enemies, but few ſoldiers*; ſo ſay I, of this *Paphian* iſle, *there are a multitude of people, but a ſmall remnant of men!* And of all brutes the moſt brutal is the volunteer in brutality; the brute ſelf-made; the brute not from the decree, but abuſe, of nature; the *ſtrange* brute-affrighting brute, with the ſtature, veſture, voice, and face of man; the brute *myſterious*, irrationally rational, and (with horror let me ſpeak it), *deplorably* immortal.

Does the *Centaur* ſtill ſound too harſh in their ears? I will ſo far indulge them, as to change it for *ſlave*; and inſtead of making free with their hides, only rattle their chains. For chains they wear, galling, infamous chains! Till ſtubborn and wild will is broken by grace, and reaſon, no man is free; but madly prefers the heavy burdens of his luſt, and the ſcourges of conſcience, to the glorious liberty of the ſons of God.

And is it poſſible that *pride* ſhould be the growth of ſlavery? They are proud of bondage, triumph in infamy, and imagine that in their high flights of folly, and riot unreſtrained, there is ſomething great. No man is great, till he ſees that every thing in this world is little. And of all that is little, that *they* are the leaſt. Would they know what is greatneſs? Great is he, and he alone, who makes the whole creation, and its amazing cauſe, the *circumference*, and his own *true* intereſt the *centre*, of his thoughts. Who has ſtrength and ſteadineſs, to weigh in perpetual and equal balance, right and wrong, body and ſoul, time and eternity, nature and God; and ſo weighing, to diſdain any

very

very anxious thought, for leſs than the greateſt good his limited nature admits, and his all-powerful God has promiſed to beſtow. That God, *whoſe are the pillars of the earth, and who has ſet the world upon them. Who in his wrath thunders out of heaven, and his adverſaries are broken to pieces.*

In *this*, Sir, in giving our ſupreme good, our ſupreme effort and concern, in ſpight of all temptation, lies the greatneſs of man. Well may it lie in a prudence, *ſuch* a prudence, as angels cannot exceed. If this is wanting, vain are all other pretenſions to greatneſs, whether of king, hero, or philoſopher. And a *Cæſar*, a *Marlborough*, a *Newton*, a *Bolingbroke*, a fidler, tumbler, and ſcaramouch, may be thrown together into one promiſcuous heap of equal impotence for attaining true greatneſs. The *performance*, indeed, of each of theſe candidates for glory, the multitude may admire; but the *performer*, at the ſame time, will be condemned by the wiſe, as little-minded and mean; nay, as a very *fool* in the language of Scripture; that is, in the judgment of God.

You ſee, therefore, to what titles of renown our *fine men*, on the ſtricteſt enquiry, may put in a juſt pretence: *fool! ſlave! centaur!*—The laſt is the neweſt, and (which would be well for them) may be the leaſt underſtood; but let them chuſe which they pleaſe. Were it referred to me, their antichriſtian glory ſhould be quite aggrandized, and ſhine, like his *holineſs*, triple-crowned with all three.

To that tremendous power, which *alone* is *truly* great, and good; in whoſe favour is all light, life, hope, peace,

peace, joy, and ſalvation; be thanks, praiſe, and dominion over the *rebel*, *fool*, *ſlave*, and *centaur*, in our hearts. And may our hearts, thus exerciſed, have a lively *feeling* of the God inviſible; and, panting for the rivers of *true pleaſure* at his right hand, abhor the *life in vogue*; and in *faith* unſhaken, and *virtue* unfeigned, be confirmed for evermore: nor longer (to the reproach eternal of the preſent age) let our ſins, as well as our ſituation, proclaim us to be

——— *Tcto diviſos orbe Britannos.* VIRG.

But to damp my riſing hope, I know not if *another* diſtinction of *Britons* from the greateſt part of mankind, may not have been the glorious indeed, but fatal cauſe of this moſt ignominious effect. It is the great glory of God to draw good out of evil. To draw evil out of good is the great infamy of man.

I ſuſpect, that an inſolent pride in *Britiſh* liberty, in ſome meaſure, inſpires *Britiſh* licence of thought, and extravagance of opinion; which as extravagant a practice for ever follows: if ſo, vice, and infidelity, are as much our *national* diſtempers, as the ſcurvy, or the ſpleen. Though diſcretion much befriends happineſs, happineſs is no friend to diſcretion. Great bleſſings intoxicate. Liberty, fraught with bleſſings as it is, when *unabuſed*, has, perhaps, been abuſed to our deſtruction. And as *Britiſh* malt, ſublimated into the moſt pernicious liquor (now ſo much in uſe) ſo *Britiſh* liberty, carried into licentiouſneſs, has poiſoned and brutaliſed the *Britiſh* ſtate. By too much exalting our ſpirits, it corrupts our manners; and that glory of our conſtitution is the diſgrace of our lives. Purely to

prove

prove themſelves *freemen*, ſome turn infidels: Hanging themſelves would be as good, and, to the public, a leſs pernicious, proof. Such men ſhould perform a long quarentine ere admitted to the embrace even of a brother. Heaven preſerve thee, my friend, from the freedom, and wiſdom, and happineſs, now in vogue. He is moſt free who is bound by the laws; he is moſt wiſe who owns himſelf weak; he is moſt happy who abridges his *pleaſures*; and he is moſt magnanimous, O ye bold, intrepid, heaven-defying, *Britons!* who fears his God.

He, indeed, is the moſt magnanimous, for by that fear he is fortified againſt all other. And he is *by far* the moſt happy! for the Divine Favour, the light of God's countenance is the *ſun* of the human ſoul, whence all its vegetation of real felicity, and though the world, (which from him receives all its feeble rays) may greatly ſhine in our eyes, yet, as wiſely may we expect vigorous and vivifying heat from the *moon*, as any *ſolid* ſatisfaction from it.

But juſt one word to the buſy, ambitious, learned, and gay. Vice and virtue excepted, no man on earth can ſay, what is good or ill, in as great a tumult and uproar as your paſſions are, O ye *buſy!* and *ambitious!* about every thing *elſe:* And to love, and labour at, what God commands, and to deſire and hope, what he promiſes, is the ſingle great leſſon, O ye *learned!* and the ſingle true pleaſure, O ye *gay!* of human life.

And, now, my friend, farewell. I muſt truſt myſelf no longer with the pen; for while I think there is a poſſibility, that, touched by ſome happy ſtroke, but one

fellow

fellow mortal may be raiſed from a periſhing *man of the earth*, to a bleſſed immortal, my buſy mind perpetually ſuggeſts new hints, and my heart knows not how to refrain from purſuing them. The volume grows upon my hands, till its very bulk would defeat its end. New rays of thought dart in upon me, which, like croſs lights, confound and perplex each other. Something of this you may have perceived already. Even Centaurs *have been* human, and I feel the ſtrong tie of humanity, when going to bid them a laſt, an everlaſting farewel. Like one about to leave unhappy friends in the midſt of a deſtruction, which yet, by timely care, they might eſcape, ſtill, at the moment of departure, ſome new caution occurs to me, ſome new exhortation, ſomething unſaid, or not ſo well ſaid, as it might have been. But now, the adieu muſt be final. With only this additional, and ſtill more urgent, and to them ſurpriſing, motive for reformation, *(viz.)* My aſſuring them, that what I have hitherto, through tenderneſs, allowed to paſs for fable, is actual fact. That the Centaur is *indeed* not fabulous. That a man without religion is really a beaſt; and ſuch is he pronounced in Scripture, where it is ſaid that † *He alſo is fleſh*; that is, a brute! And, (what ſhould ſtrike them not a little) this is aſſigned as the reaſon for ſweeping away our degenerate race by the flood. A brute, in truth, he is, with this only difference, that his ſuperior underſtanding gives him more venom than the moſt envenomed of ſerpents; and enables him to do more fatal miſchief to himſelf, and others, than without the

† Gen. vi.

curſe

curſe of reaſon, of abuſed reaſon, could poſſibly be done. So far therefore is it from ſatire, that kind admonition is all which the word Centaur implies. And as in ſome words there was once imagined to reſide a magic power over *dæmons* themſelves, that opinion might ſtill prevail, if the deſign of theſe letters, to the wiſh of all honeſt men, could ſucceed, and the foul nature of the Centaur be caſt out by the name. If this ſhould be the fortunate event, theſe pages would live in the lives of thoſe they ſhall reclaim. And if ſo, O *Bolingbroke!* and you, his applauding idolizers! what to *this* is that vain immortality which the meaneſt writers wiſh, and which the nobleſt can ſcarce attain? Praiſe is an error, where Pardon is indulgence; and pardon is indulgence to the brighteſt parts miſapplied. They rather provoke, than pleaſe, the worthy mind, by laying it under the diſagreeable neceſſity, and claſhing diſpoſitions, of admiring the writer, and diſapproving the man. Which, in ſome ſort, is like admiring *Nero* for his fiddle, when, through his own frenzy, his glorious capital was in flames.

I am, my dear friend,

Nov. 29, 1754. *Truly Yours.*

POST.

POSTSCRIPT.

I Received your objections, and thank you for them. I believe every judicious reader will make the ſame. All I can ſay, for mitigation of their cenſure, is, that they who take on them to read lectures in this laughing age, if they wiſh an audience but moderately large, muſt have weight enough to make impreſſion on the ſerious; and levity enough to catch thoſe wanton ears, which, unleſs tickled by that feather, would continue ſhut as cloſe, as their ſilly hearts are to virtue, though an angel ſhould take the chair.

I know you are ſo kindly concerned for your friend's reputation, that the mixture of levity with ſolemnity, in theſe letters, makes you apprehenſive of its expoſing the writer to cenſure or ridicule. Yet, how is it poſſible to write on ſo dreadfully mixed a ſubject, as the ways of men, without being agitated by the moſt contradictory emotions? His follies ſo fantaſtically wrong, ſo ludicrouſly abſurd: His capacities for virtue and happineſs, ſo noble: His vices ſo ſhocking: Their conſequence ſo deplorable!—So earneſtly deſirous I am of waking him from that dream, in which he nods upon the brink of eternal ruin, that if nothing can do it but my own diſgrace, my own *buffoonery* (as perhaps he will think it), I rejoice to fall ſo low. If he will but laugh *with* me, at *himſelf*, he is freely welcome to laugh *at* me, as much as he ſees cauſe. It is not his applauſe, but his welfare, that is ſought. *Amendment* is the point in view. That point unpropoſed, (and could the † Viſcount propoſe it?) all cenſure is mere malice, and mere

† Lord Bolingbroke.

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impertinence is all harangue; and entitles a *Tully*, a *Bolingbroke*, and a parrot, to juſt the ſame portion of our eſteem, and applauſe. Would you, my friend, judge aright of men? Aſk not *what* they have done, but *why*; or their characters will be ſtill in the dark.—But I fear I am ſetting your judgment of men too right for my own intereſt; I muſt leave it under the power of ſome partiality, for the ſake of your humble ſervant.

Pardon one word more. † *Centaur* is of *Greek* extraction, and ſignifies ſtimulation. May it here prove (as intended) a ſpur to virtue; and, moſt, in myſelf. Standing in awe of my own pen, may I take the counſel I give! Thus only can I be *ſure* of doing any good; thus only can I boldly ſay, without the reader's leave, that I have not writ in vain. Is not this a new expedient for writing to ſome little purpoſe; and an expedient of no ſmall ſervice to the public, if all our writers would uſe the ſame? Their numbers, then, would be leſs a nuiſance; and half the nation (bleſſed change!) would aim at virtue, as well as fame. This, too, might be ſome ſort of apology for thoſe heroes of the pen, who, dauntleſs at their own danger, with the ſpirit of a *Curtius*, for the ſake of their dear country, leap headlong into the preſs, (too haſty patriots!) and periſh there.

Vincit amor patriæ, laudumque immenſa cupido. VIRG.

† From Κεντεῖν, ſtimulare.

FINIS.

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